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ABSTRACT

This fourth volume of a six-volume study of a school district code-named "Milford" provides an ethnographic account of Kensington School today. Tracing the school's development through the 1979-80 school year, the study's central metaphor is of a ship on a perilous journey. Chapter 1 describes the school's opening day and "Crosscurrents in Kensington's Course." Chapter 2 explores Kensington's "turbulent environment" at the federal, state, and local levels. Chapter 3's exposition of "The Views from the Principal's Office" examines the tenure of four successive principals. Chapter 4 focuses on Kensington staff and on pedagogy in Kensington's classrooms, including sections on instructional goals and objectives, curriculum and instruction, instructional styles and methods, and instructional control. In chapter 5, "Between the Lines: An Emerging Concept of Organizational Identity," the authors look closely at Kensington's building, its past, staff, instructional program, and facades and realities. The final chapter, "Implications for Thought and Practice," discusses longitudinal nested systems and educational policy perspectives and offers a summary and conclusions. In order to protect the anonymity of the school district studied in such detail, pseudonyms have been used for all place names (school, school district, city, county, state) and personal names (school superintendents, school board members, teachers, students) appearing in the various volumes of this set. (JBM)

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INNOVATION AND CHANGE IN AMERICAN EDUCATION
KENSINGTON REVISITED: A FIFTEEN YEAR FOLLOW-UP OF AN INNOVATIVE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL AND ITS FACULTY

VOLUME IV

THE KENSINGTON SCHOOL TODAY: SAILING STORMY STRAITS, A VIEW OF EDUCATIONAL POLICY

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The Kensington School Today: Sailing Stormy Straits, A View of Educational Policy

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Volume IV

Innovation and Change in American Education
Kensington Revisited: A Fifteen-Year Follow-up
of an Innovative Elementary School and Its Faculty

June, 1983

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Foreword

Innovation and Change in American Education
Kensington Revisited: A 15 Year Follow-Up of An Innovative School and Its Faculty

(Smith, Dwyer, Kleine, Prunty)

This research is about innovation and change in American education. It began as Kensington Revisited: A 15 year follow-up of an innovative school and its faculty, Project G78-0074, supported by the National Institute of Education. As in most of our case study research, the initial problem was buffeted about by the reality of settings, events, and people as captured by our several modes of inquiry--participant observation, intensive open ended interviews, and the collection and analysis of multiple documents. The setting was Kensington, an elementary school built fifteen years ago as a prototypical innovative building with open space, laboratory suites instead of classrooms, a perception core instead of a library and a nerve center for the latest in technological education equipment. The people were the series of administrators, teachers, pupils, and parents who worked in, attended, or sent their children to the school. Three principals have come and gone, the fourth is in his first year. Three cadres of faculty have staffed the school. The events were the activities of those people as they built and transformed the school over the years. This story we found, and we constructed, as part of a larger setting, the Milford School District which had its own story, actors, and events and which provided an important context for Kensington.

In the course of the search for the major theme about which our developing ideas and data could be integrated, "Innovation and Change in American Education," became the guiding thesis. That theme is composed of a half dozen sub themes, each of which makes up a separate volume in the report. While we believe the totality of the study has its own kind of integrity and that each volume extends the meanings of the others, we have written each as a "stand alone" piece. That is, we believe each speaks to an important domain of Innovation and Change in American Education, each draws most heavily upon a particular subset of our data, and each contains important descriptive narratives, substantive grounded interpretations and generalizations. This foreword, which appears in each volume, is intended, in a few sentences, to keep the totality and each of the pieces in the forefront of the reader's consciousness.

Volume I Chronicling the Milford School District: An Historical Context of the Kensington School

Kensington's fifteen year existence is but one small segment of Milford's sixty-five years of recorded history and one school in a district with a dozen other schools. The superintendent who built the school is just one of five individuals who have held the post. As we have told the story, we have raised generalizations regarding innovation and change, and we have presaged themes of policy, of local, state and national influences on the school, of organizational structure and process, and of curriculum and teaching. The key documents in developing the perspective were the offical school board minutes. Newsletters to patrons, newspaper accounts, other records, and interviews, formal and informal, supplemented the basic documents.

Volume II Milford: The School District as Contemporary Context

In a fundamental sense, Volume II is a continuation, a final chapter as it were, to the historical context of the Milford School District. It is a long chapter, however, for the central actors and events which immediately and directly shaped the Kensington School are in place, just as the school is in place. The ebb and flow of the district, in its recent history, is brought to a particular focus, one that will illuminate the events and themes that appear in the development and change in the Kensington School over its fifteen year history and in its current status. The board of education, the superintendency, the central office staff, and their interrelationships lead toward "a governance and organizational perspective on innovation and change." Board minutes remain the central core of the data with increasing amounts of information from public documents (e.g., newpapers), interviews with central actors, and observation of meetings.

Volume III Innovation and Change at Kensington: Annals of a Community and School

After carefully examining the historical context of the Milford School District, our focus shifts to innovation and change at the Kensington School. Our search for an explanation of the profound changes that have taken place in a once innovative school, has pushed us back in time and obliged us to consider such wider topics as demography, neighborhoods, and political jurisdiction. Volume III begins by tracing origins and development of a community that became part of of the Milford School district in 1949 and a neighborhood that began sending its children to Kensington School in 1964. With the opening of Kensington, the annals of the community are joined by a history of the school. As we develop the stories of Kensington and its neighborhood in tandem, we begin to tell of the interdependency of school and community and to further our understanding of innovation and change in schooling in contemporary American Society.

Volume IV Kensington Today: Sailing Stormy Straits, a View of Education Policy in Action

An ethnographic account of the school today with particular reference to educational policy in action at the day to day school level is presented here. The major metaphor is a ship sailing through stormy straits on a perilous journey during the 1979-80 school year. Staff and students produce vivid scenes reflecting issues in racial integration, special education, discipline, and instruction in the basic subjects. Policy analysis seems analogous to the fine art of navigation.

Volume V Educational Innovators Then and Now

Crucial to any education enterprise are the people who staff the schools. Smith and Keith characterized the original faculty of Kensington as true believers. In this Volume we sketch life histories, careers, serials of the original faculty based on extended open-ended interviews (2-7 hours), comments by spouses, friends and colleagues, and various writing--books, brochures, reports, and dissertations. Patterns and themes arise in the form of "secular religion," "you do go home again," "organizational niches and career opportunities for educationists," "maintenance of educational ideology," "continuity and change in personality," and "doctoral education, a disaster for reform oriented practitioners."

Volume VI Case Study Research Methodology: The Intersect of Participant Observation, Historical Method, Life History Research, and Follow-Up Studies

Regularly in our inquiry we have produced "methodological appendices" to our research reports. We saw our efforts as clarifying the craft of research as we practiced it, ordering its evolving nature, and continuously attempting to integrate it with other ways of knowing. This essay continues in that tradition. Specifically our mode of participant observation now has enlarged itself by a substantial historical trust and a substantial life history or biographical thrust. In addition, our research is an instance of a special methodological stance, a follow-up or return to the setting of an earlier major study, (e.g., Middletown in Transition). In this way it takes on a time series quality with repeated observation. In doing the descriptive and analytical pieces, Volumes I through V, in reading about how others have done similar work, in talking with proponents of the various methods, we have reached for a broader synthesis of case study research methods in the intersection of these several approaches. We see all this as an important addition to the methodological literature in educational inquiry.

In summary, our research is a unique blend of approaches to the problems and issues of Innovation and Change in American Education. It is grounded in the multiple aspects of a single school in a single school district. As in all case studies the particular events have major meanings for the actors in the setting, but, also, we believe that these events often capture images and ideas that have relevance for other people in other times and places. Recently, Geertz has spoken of these as "experience-near" and "experience-distant" conceptions. In each form we hope to be providing mirrors for educationists to see themselves better, that is more clearly, to be conscious of rephrased problems, and to create more viable options and alternatives. Our multi volumed report is presented with these aspirations in mind.

Louis M. Smith

CONTENTS

Preface..iii

Chapter 1 The School Today.................................1

- The Opening Day............................4
- Crosscurrents in Kensington's Course......15

Chapter 2 Kensington's Turbulent Environment.............17

- Storm Warnings.............................17
- Federal Involvement in Public Education...19
- The State Role.............................28
- Prevailing Local Conditions...............33
- Summary....................................45

Chapter 3 The View From the Principal's Office...........47

- A Succession of Leaders...................47
  - The Shelby Era.......................48
  - Edwards's Revisionary Decade.........49
  - Marking Time: The Hawkins Years.....56
  - The Current Head: Jonas Wales.......59
- Summary and Implications..................85

Chapter 4 Inside Classrooms..............................87

- Kensington's Amiable Staff................87
- Pedagogy in Kensington's Classrooms.......93
  - Goals and Objective of Instruction...93
  - Curriculum and Instruction...........96
  - Styles and Methods of Instruction...107
  - Control for Instruction.............115
- Conclusion................................127

Chapter 5 Between the Lines: An Emerging Concept of Organizational Identity........................130

- A Rose is a Rose, Or Is It?..............133
  - The Building........................133
  - The Past as Legacy..................136
  - Stars, Heroes, and Troopers.........139
  - The Instructional Program...........147
  - Facades and Realities...............156
- Conclusion................................157

Chapter 6 Implications for Thought and Practice.........159

Longitudinal Nested Systems..............159
Perspectives on Educational Policy.......175
Summary and Conclusions..................187

References...190

FIGURES

Figure 2.1 Areas of State Regulation in Public Schools...32

Figure 4.1 Kensington's Master Schedule, 1979............98

Figure 4.2 An Initial Conception of Individualized Curriculum and Instruction...................128

Figure 5.1 The Social Context of Kensington's Administrative Change........................131

Figure 5.2 The Cultures of the Kensington School........145

Figure 5.3 The Institutional Plan's Redefinition of Teacher Pupil Roles..........................149

Figure 5.4 Impact of Textbook Teaching on Aspects of Classroom and School Social Structure and Processes..............................155

Figure 6.1 The Longitudinal Nested Systems Model........161

Figure 6.2 Selected Events and School Personnel Arrayed on the Longitudinal Nested Systems Model.....163

Figure 6.3 A Longitudinal Nested Systems Portrayal of the Changes in the Kensington School.........168

Figure 6.4 Dimensions of Kensington's Educational Policy...........................176

Figure 6.5 From Policy to Classroom Plan................181

PREFACE

In 1971 we published a long monograph entitled Anatomy of Educational Innovation (Smith & Keith). The report presented the findings of a participant observation study of a radically conceived school and chronicled the people and events involved in its inception. Fifteen years later, we had the opportunity to return to this school and once again, to observe and interview its faculty in their daily work. In addition, we tracked down the original Kensington faculty and interviewed them about their lives and careers since their Kensington experiences.

Our proposal for this work specified the problem in a most common sense way: "What has happened to the innovative Kensington School after 15 years?" This simple query, however, leads to a host of lingering questions:

> Is the building still as beautiful as it was? Have the carpets, an issue of contention a decade and a half ago, held up?
>
> Have the large open space loft areas been maintained or have walls been built to convert the open instructional areas into more self-contained classroom space?
>
> Have team teaching and individualized instruction reached new heights and become stabilized modes of instruction?
>
> The original Kensington doctrine was a radical manifesto for democratic control of education. The pupil was to be in control of his/her learning, the teacher in control of his/her teaching, and the principal in control of his/her building vis-a-vis the district. Stated simply, what is the current resolution of the governance issue? How did it come about?
>
> (Excerpts from the Research Proposal, 1977)

More abstractly, Kensington Revisited explores questions of elementary school structure and function; school governance at the building and district levels; the interplay of schools, communities and state and federal educational organizations; teaching and learning; and human dynamics in school organizations. In short, we are writing a contemporary "Anatomy" of Kensington, a study that serves as contrast and comparison with the original volume.

Seeking relief from three years of intensive field study at the school, we recently succumbed to the call of Missouri's fall colors and mild temperatures, and canoed a sparkling Ozark stream. We wished, for that one day, to leave Kensington School, research, and writing behind. Somewhere along the stream, however, thoughts of Kensington reemerged: Kensington, a public elementary school in contemporary America, swept by its own environment, subject to its own hazards and snags. As our imaginations wandered, and as we considered the 15-year history of the school, we decided that Kensington perhaps resembled an oceangoing vessel charting a precarious course through a restless sea. Thus cast, we begin Kensington Today, the story of an average elementary school struggling to find its way through all too familiar problems.

In Chapter 1, we relate the current state of the facility and describe a few of the activities that characterize the start of the school year. This first glimpse foreshadows the contrasts between the school today and the Kensington vision of years past.

In Chapter 2, we examine Kensington's changing context, the 70 years of policy conflicts argued at national, state, and local levels. The creation of the school amid this history was unusual. The school's genesis represented a unique convergence of events leading to a radical educational innovation in an otherwise conservative community. Community sentiments fed by national economic and political trends set the stage for Kensington's rapid return to more traditional schooling practices.

In contrast to the macro perspective of Chapter 2, Chapter 3 examines the personal influences of the school's succession of principals on the Kensington program. The individual qualities, careers, and ambitions of these four men--together with some twists of fate--greatly affected the Kensington story. The differences between the first and current principals starkly illuminate the dilemmas of school leadership.

We return in Chapter 4 to the classroom and instruction. We try to convey the attitude of the teachers, humorous and caring as they proceed in the rigors of teaching. We record the changes in student composition, changes that the staff offer as explanations of obvious pedagogical shifts. And we discuss the influence of state and federal intervention in the school's program, a topic of concern and debate among the faculty. Kensington has been steered on its course from innovation to tradition by the conditions and beliefs of its students, community, and educators. Its movement raises perennial questions about the form and purpose of schooling in society.

In Chapter 5, we summarize the Kensington tale by comparing the organizational identity of today's school with the Kensington of 1964. Meaning is sought from changes in the physical structure of the building, in the reputation and operating procedures of the school, in the leaders and staff, in the program, and in the school's guiding ideology.

The Kensington saga is, of course, one of many accounts of planned change in education. The opportunity to return to the school 15 years after its inception, however, has allowed a uniquely rich perspective. In the sixth and final chapter of this document we arrange the major events of Kensington's history in a framework of longitudinal nested systems and discuss the utility of such a model for both researchers and agents of change. The chapter concludes with a discussion of educational policy, illustrating issues in policy formulation and implementation with examples drawn from our study of Kensington School today.

CHAPTER 1

THE SCHOOL TODAY

Kensington, the building, still stirs lively debate. Some of the school's longtime staff and visitors who walked the halls when Kensington was new remember its heyday. They might compare it in terms of our metaphor with the Queen Elizabeth. Others more recently working within Kensington's walls might just as likely conjure images of the Titanic.

The building itself is not entirely responsible for the dissatisfactions currently expressed. Many of the changes wrought in Kensington's structure since its inception have drastically affected the design's potential for efficient functioning. Some critics' frustrations are related to the recent back-to-basics view of pedagogy for which Kensington's original structure is clearly inappropriate. Other critics from outside the school still complain about the building because of the "favorite-son" treatment they perceive the school enjoys; it remains the only building in the Milford School District with both carpeting and air conditioning. Descriptions of the original structure and of the modifications that accrued over the years are fully chronicled elsewhere, but we will pause for a brief tour before beginning the story.

From the outside Kensington appears worn. Its cinder block construction is weathered and dirty. "Solar screens," cinder block lattices to block the sun from large windows in each classroom, remain as part of the original building. These lattices provide ladders to the roof and are now topped with strands of barbed wire to discourage adventurous students from undertaking the forbidden climb. (The students climb to the roof anyway.) The unpleasant effect of barbed wire is punctuated by heavy metal grills, anti-vandal screens, that have further obliterated the windows. Broken glass and other litter spread over the playground add to a growing disquiet. Finally, we are confronted by a graffito etched into the Plexiglas pane of Kensington's front door: "This school sucks!"

Inside, a corridor leads to the administrative center, once called a "suite." Now, it is simply termed "the office." In the doorway, a gray plastic trash can catches dripping water from a leaking and stained ceiling. Similar stains throughout the building attest to a history of such leaks in the expansive flat roof. The office space, once open and airy, is now cluttered with portable cabinets, desks and rolling partitions. The area's hub seems to be a small cubical office constructed of temporary materials standing free of other walls in the middle of the room. It has no electrical or telephone outlets of its own, but several extension cords taped to a graying carpet supply those needs. A small sign, "Principal," hangs above the doorway. On one wall, a bronze plaque is mounted in memorial to a previous and deceased principal.

One corner of the building houses a large rectangular room that serves as both gymnasium and lunchroom. Once a covered play shelter, it has been walled in to better meet the needs of the school and the demands of the climate. Cafeteria tables hang along one wall where they can be easily folded down for lunch and folded up for physical education classes.

The classrooms are uniquely arranged around the perimeter of the rest of the building, opening outwardly and individually to the school's playground and inwardly toward a core. The classrooms themselves are neither elaborate nor spectacular but are adequate for the activities they house. Their carpeting, although worn, remains serviceable; it could not be termed attractive. Each room has its own sink and drinking fountain. Small bathrooms are distributed at points around the core, each serving several rooms. Each room contains the elementary school universals: teacher's desk, students' desks, wall clock, small American flag, and chalkboard (a green variety). All the rooms have a cluttered look owing to the lack of storage facilities designed into the original building. The most striking feature of the classroom suites would not startle most visitors unfamiliar with Kensington's history, but others would be surprised at the number of walls between the rooms. In 1965 no wall separated any two classes. Today, concrete blocks or plasterboard and two-by-four studs enclose most rooms. A few two-room suites and even one three-room suite remain. Within these remnants of the open-space design, however, divisions have been created with movable cabinets.

The core, the "perception core" as it once was called, around which the classrooms are clustered, is now the resource room. Rows of low bookshelves and small tables fill its space, much as they did in an earlier era. Stairs in one corner lead up to the teachers' lounge which maintains the unique feature of cutaway walls exposing its occupants to all who work or pass below. The same staircase leads downward to a small room. At one time this room carried the label "nerve center" and housed a hub of wires and other materials for a grandly conceived audio-visual instructional program. Currently, the room is the attractive site for remedial reading classes; all traces of its earlier purpose are gone.

The remaining noteworthy feature is the children's theatre composed of a sunken, carpeted floor, an acting tower, and a rear projector viewing screen. The acting tower is stuffed with unused desks and chairs. The special screen displays only a ragged hole. The rear projector room is now a storage area for textbooks, clay molds, and a kiln. The carpeted area frequently seats groups of wiggling children, delightedly eyeing some televised educational production.

With this brief circuit of Kensington complete, we return to the teachers' lounge for the opening day of school.

The Opening Day

The First Hello

The lights blink twice. It is a few minutes before 9:00 a.m., August 30. With good-humored moans and groans, conversations come to an end, and the teachers file out of the lounge and head for their classrooms. One teacher carries a brightly colored satchel over her shoulder. Lettered on its side in bold print is written, "The Three Rs--First Recess, Second Recess, Third Recess." The teachers exude humor and a sense of practical readiness to face a new group of children on the first day of school.

The children, anxious and expectant, descend from buses and wait in lines on the playground to be admitted to their classrooms. Many seem to be pondering the comments or stories they have heard other children tell about their new teachers. Others chatter gaily, bubbling with the summer's events. Still others stand quietly, watch other children, and shyly anticipate new friendships.

The outer classroom doors swing open. Students and teachers come face to face. The children, now unnaturally wide-eyed and closemouthed, pass single file into the classrooms. Most find their names lettered on cards or tags indicating their special place--a home for the coming year--and quietly slip into the desk. Many children nervously fumble with their new notebooks, "super-hero" lunch boxes, or long, never-before-sharpened pencils.

Teachers scurry to seat all the children and begin to list students who will buy lunch that day. At precisely 9:00 a.m. their activity is interrupted. In each room, a circular, grilled speaker crackles as if clearing its throat and then blares the familiar strands of "Stars and Stripes Forever." Everyone stands, faces a 10-by-14 inch American flag on wall or desk and in unison solemnly recites the "Pledge of Allegiance." This brief morning ritual signals the final, and for some abrupt, end of summer vacation. Four hundred and forty lives are linked together by the act.

The scenes about the school begin to vary.

Mrs. Alvena Smith's Primary Class

9:03 Roughly 10 out of 23 kids are in the room. Mrs. Smith is talking livelily with former students: "I wish I had you back! Seth, you grew!" She has an old-shoe, country style. She shushes a boy and asks him to take off his cap. "You help me and I'll help you remember my name and your name." She begins to hand out name tags. One child says: "I'm sort of nervous." Mrs. Smith: "Bargain--I won't bite you if you don't bite me."

A mother brings in another child. Mrs. Smith begins discussing school rules. "You've been out of school, talking all the time, running around. Now you're in school." She is interrupted by a child who needs to go to a different second-grade room and another who has lost a dime. "Boys and girls, remember about money. Boys, keep it in the bottom

> of your pocket or billfold. Girls, keep it in a purse or in a handkerchief pinned on. Never put it in desks--it gets legs. . . .
>
> "You're grown up now, not first-graders any more. In second grade we don't speak out. If you want to join a conversation, raise your hand. In the morning we sharpen pencils, get a drink, and go to the bathroom. We have a bathroom. . . . Sometimes, in the bathroom, there's a mess which gets stinky. How many like a stinky bathroom? If it's messy come to me, even if I'm with a reading class."

9:35 The kids start their written work. Mrs. Smith comments about what she does to talkers: "I give them a big smooch!"

9:46 She asks Bill to take the lunch list to the school secretary. One girl comes up to her with a question. She gets a hug. The loudspeaker goes on. A voice says, "Merlin's to stay for lunch." Mrs. Smith, "Merlin did you hear that?" Merlin: "Yes." She repeats, "You are to stay for lunch."

9:56 Mrs. Smith moves around the room answering questions.

9:57 To a talking girl: "Angie, you're to move to another table if you talk one more time. Don't test me!"

10:17 Mrs. Smith passes out more dittos. [She says to the observer, "They're getting restless."]

10:33 She has the kids stand up. She talks of the summer, hard chairs, and long sitting. She has the kids stretch and "try to reach the ceiling. Pretend you're a rag doll. Wiggle our fingers and toes, all over." A student says, "My pants are coming down." She says, "Don't let that happen!" (FN, 8/79)[1]

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[1] Throughout the narrative the sources of quoted material are dated and identified. FN indicates the material was recorded in field notes, SO identifies summary observations, and TI denotes taped interviews. Doc. identifies material taken from extant documents in the setting.

The Fourth-Grade Pod

8:50 In the pod, Miss Yancy, Miss Donald, and Mr. Land [fourth-grade teachers] are all joking around. Miss Yancy tosses a rubber ball over the room divider at Miss Donald. Mr. Land brings over a poster with construction paper apples, each bearing a student's name. Land says, "What if these are all rotten apples?" Yancy: "Make cider!" All three teachers laugh. The children are all outside but about to come in.

9:05 The children are sharpening pencils. The sharpener makes a lot of noise. The children sit quietly--a few yawns are seen. One boy is sitting at a desk with no name. Land tells him to find the right desk and "on the way, spit out the gum." In each of the three areas in the pod, the major activity is making sure the children are in the correct section.

Miss Yancy explains which teacher will teach what subject. A student arrives late. Yancy asks the student to see the attendance secretary.

9:15 Miss Donald is writing the day's schedule on the board.

8:55 School Starts
9:01 Tardy

She says: "Martha, what do you do if you're tardy?" Martha: "Come in and go to the office." Donald: "No, go to the office via outside." She then continues to write:

9:10-10:00 Reading
10:05-10:30 Handwriting
10:35-11:05 Spelling
11:05-11:35 Music, PE (restroom)
11:40-12:00 Social Studies

She holds up a social studies book and says, "Brand new book--never been used before. There's all kinds of neat projects in here." Then: "The most important part of the whole day is coming up at this next time," and writes:

12:05-12:35 Lunch

She continues:

12:40-1:10 Math
1:10-1:45 Science

1:50-2:20 English
2:25-2:45 Recess
2:50-3:00 Water and Restroom
3:00-3:30 Study Hall

Miss Donald continues: "Last year the bus riders left early, at 3:25. This year, we all leave at the same time. Lunch is 60 cents this year. Lunch boxes go on that shelf."

9:40 The three teachers all switch sections and then introduce themselves to the new group of students. The children are assigned to reading groups. Land reads off a list of names, and the children move from one room to the next as the names are called. [Assignments are made for all students. More than one group functions in each section of the pod.]

10:07 The children are all working now. Miss Donald moves from group to group checking work, giving directions, answering questions. Miss Yancy puts her arm around a boy's shoulder while answering his question, then tells another boy to "turn around and get to work." [Miss Yancy's approach is relaxed and enthusiastic. She's a "nice" teacher.]

[One point worth mentioning is that after the maintenance functions, the children began work right away in the reading books. This series--kindergarten through sixth grades--gives the kind of continuity that permits resumption of activities immediately, even after summer. Kids don't seem to be having any problems.] (FN, 8/79)

Mr. Brando's Sixth-Grade Room

9:03 Brando introduces himself to the students: "Most of you know me." He stands in front of the room, in front of the chalkboard on which he has written the day's schedule. He asks the kids to come up to his desk and sign for lunch: "I want you to write from now on in cursive. I want it to be neat. Walk up to my desk this way, go back that way." [He gestures to two aisles.]

9:07 Brando reads the class list to check the attendance. Students answer "here" as their names are called. A school bus arrives late. It is visible through the window. It discharges more students. Two new students enter. Brando adjusts the attendance list and repeats the lunch instructions. The students are silently looking around at each other--wide-eyed stares, some smiles, some quiet giggles.

Brando finishes some paperwork and says, "This is what we are going to do this year and we'll be very firm about it. This is your last year in elementary school. Junior high does things differently. They are very strict at junior high--three tardies and you're suspended. I'll try to get you ready for junior high. If you do your work, you'll pass; if not, you'll be back with me. They expect you to know the basics.

"This year, always write in cursive. I don't like to give homework assignments, but if I give assignments during class that you don't finish, you will have to take them home. Any work not completed will be counted as zero. I expect all work to be finished. I'll throw away any work not neat and in cursive. I won't take time to read it. Seating will remain as is, so don't ask to have your seat changed." He sends a student to the office with the completed attendance list and tells the other students to get out paper and pencils or pens. He directs students to copy the schedule on the board, finds a mistake, and says: "I made a mistake right away."

9:24 Brando: "I need to go to another teacher's room. Do you know what I expect while I'm gone? Tell me, Bruce." Bruce: "To be quiet." Brando: "Uh, huh. I'll be right back."

Brando leaves. The kids continue copying the schedule. The room is absolutely quiet. Brando returns, sees two boys who are sitting side by side at desks in the rear of the room without name tags. He tells them to find their right desks which are near the front of the room. The boys look at one another and smile knowingly. [I get the impression that those smiles meant: "I saw the name tags, Teach, but I wanted to sit with my friend."]

9:30 He assigns a spelling lesson. Instructions: "Write the words in alphabetical order. Write the number of syllables in each word. Write the word three times." Talking about the weekly spelling test Brando says: "You should know how to spell each word and write a sentence for each word to tell that you know what the word means."

10:10 Brando sees a boy attempting to borrow a sheet of paper. He moves to stand over the student and says:

"You're borrowing paper? On the first day of class, you're borrowing paper?" [Brando's tone of voice is reminiscent of the scene in the movie Oliver where the young Oliver asks for more gruel in the orphanage.]

A minute later, Brando sees the same boy attempt to borrow a pencil. He says loudly from across the room: "You're borrowing a pencil, too? Did you wear shoes today? Is your head attached so you can't forget it? Stand up! Did you wear a belt?" His voice is teasing but taunting. Student is standing with his head hanging, chin on chest. Then sits down. Brando turns away. The boy looks behind him at his cronies and grins broadly. Brando starts talking about wearing belts and the importance of taking baths so that the room won't begin to smell. There are giggles all around the room. (FN, 8/79)

There's Music in the Air: Mrs. Collins's Music Class

The classroom teacher has accompanied his children to the music room. He introduces the music teacher, Mrs. Collins, to the students and says: "The only reason that I walked you down today is to show you how and to tell you that if she [Mrs. Collins] gives anybody a super reward like 'These kids were great,' they'll get some free time in my classroom." The kids go, "Oooooh!" "If they get a bad note, watch out! If the whole class gets a good note, we'll go to recess or do something fun. But on the other hand, if you are--" Mrs. Collins interrupts and adds: "Gross!" The kids all giggle. The classroom teacher nods and leaves.

10:40 Mrs. Collins calls the roll. The music room is carpeted in blue, and three long lines of chairs fill most of the room. A piano is in the front. Bookshelves lined with music books occupy one side. The back of the room is filled with instrument cases and small spaces for ensemble or individual instrumental lessons.

Mrs. Collins's voice is very animated. She sends forms around the room on which students can sign up for instrumental music. She says: "Your classroom teacher talked about rules. I'll tell you what I told the last class. I'm harrrrrd [like a throaty growl] on rules. I'll give you once, twice, the third time you go see Dr. Wales [the principal]. The other thing is while I'm talking you listen. The Lord gave you two good ears but when your ears open

> your mouth slams shut. When you're talking, I'll listen to you."
>
> 10:50 The custodian enters and messes with the fuse box. The lights all go out, but Mrs. Collins just continues. The lights go on, the custodian leaves.
>
> Mrs. Collins introduces "Gertrude the Fern." She says: "Gertrude grows in beautiful music, but she'll croak if she doesn't hear good music. You wouldn't want to be a murderer would you?" She hands out music books from the previous year so that the kids will know the songs. "Okay, I'll play--but maybe not like your old teacher." The kids halfheartedly begin to sing. She plays very quietly. "Sit up! If you can't sing sitting, you'll have to stand!" The kids sing out. Everyone is watching the books but not all are singing.
>
> 10:58 Mrs. Collins: "You're better than the last class, they were half-asleep." She whispers and prods the kids into making suggestions for other songs to sing in a very playful, cute manner. The kids begin to really sing out. They all have joined in. They go through "Erie Canal" then "Yankee Doodle." One girl says, "Can we sing it again?" A boy in back begins to move his arms in animated gestures to the rhythm. The students are noticeably loosened up. They begin to talk to one another. Mrs. Collins introduces a two-part song. She says, "Boys sing the top line, girls the bottom. Male students sing 'The Men.'" Mrs. Collins repeats, "The Men." They sing "On Top of Old Smokey." Then Collins switches to "On Top of Spaghetti." The kids, delighted, join her and begin to shout the song. Nonsense becomes prominent. Collins just frowns and most of the students settle down. (FN, 8/79)

Behind the Scenes

Behind these classroom scenes, many other persons are working this first day of school to get Kensington under way. Some of this other activity is glimpsed in our vignettes--the custodian testing circuits, and the voice of the loudspeaker announcing the "Pledge of Allegiance," or the instructional aide reminding a student to stay for lunch. A summary observation captures this point:

> The teacher's aide was in once or twice picking up lunch counts. Mrs. Smith was on the intercom to Mrs. Rae [the school secretary] a time or two. The image I had of all of these supernumerary people is that they fit hand in glove with the teachers. They were all doing their jobs kind of routinely, organizing which kids belonged here or there, or which kids needed notes for various things.
>
> But there seemed to be no staff conflicts over these activities. Interdependent parts were interlocked and moving along. I presume that most of this was with the welfare of the kids latently, if not overtly, in mind. (SO, 8/79)

That observation extends to Kensington's reading teacher, who is not exactly a classroom teacher but holds no administrative rank. It is necessary the first day for Mrs. Stratton to interrupt teachers in their classrooms, removing students for testing or inquiring on the whereabouts of individual students. Her movements are recorded, again, in summary observations.

> Mrs. Stratton was in and out of the classroom and obviously knew a lot of the kids. She came in to talk to Mrs. Smith. She put her arm on her shoulder, chatted briefly with her, and then as the kids came over--as she knew different children--she would talk with them about the summer or the year or whatnot.
>
> I paid a short visit to her, mainly because I really hadn't had a chance to say hi, how are you doing, and all that. She's kind of a special person. She was administering a Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test at the time to a student from the second grade. And she was excited because her room's been painted and it's fixed up and she said that it's more like her now. She indicated that she had some new freedom to do things in some way that she hadn't been able to in the past. She's starting with first-graders, and she's not doing the fifth and sixth as she had been. Implicitly her notion was that by the time they are in fifth and sixth grade, you can't do much with them. They've got to start earlier. She had been starting in the second grade last year. Wales [the principal] supports her in that new way of doing it, and she's generally excited about the new approach.
>
> She acts very much like an administrator in some ways.

> I'm struck with both her mobility in the school and how she fills in on different kinds of chores and responsibilities. (SO, 8/79)

Later, we observe her interacting with Mrs. Brown, the Special Education Services teacher in the building.

> I went up to the teachers' lounge and caught the end of what looked like an informal meeting, but definitely a meeting, between the reading teacher and the special education teacher. I had been curious anyway about how their roles might overlap or how they would work out their territories, Mrs. Stratton being a teacher hired by the school district and Miss Brown a person who is paid by Special Education Services and in the building working with a specific case load. They were filling each other in on specific students' backgrounds in instances where they knew any relevant information.
>
> One of the cases they were discussing was of a child enrolled in the school this year. The parent had become displeased and already had taken the kid out of the school and enrolled him in a Catholic school. The child evidently was sullen and very quiet and withdrawn at Kensington. At the Catholic school, he became so overtly obnoxious that on the second day the mother and child were met at the door by the headmaster, mistress or whatever, and told no way--we are not accepting that student. And so the kid has now been reenrolled at Kensington.
>
> The special education teacher said that her case load this year has increased to the point where she'll no longer be able to work with kids individually at the teacher's choice of times, that she's going to have to group kids so that she won't be as flexible any more. And Mrs. Stratton indicated that her load already was 52 kids and that's only out of the first three or four grades. I was amazed by the number of kids that required, proportionally in the building, these kinds of special services. It seems to be a telling tale.
>
> The other thing is that the U.S. Department of Health, Education, and Welfare is doing some sort of research project with the Special Education Services. According to the teacher, all of the districts in the area allowed those people into their special education files except the Milford School District. Milford wouldn't let them in the building. And so they will

> be in this year. They are coming in to look at the files and interview one of the teachers. The staff is nervous as a cat about it. Anyway, the special education teacher indicated that they would be going through her files and that sort of thing, and there was some nervousness about that, too. (SO, 9/79)

This view of the Kensington ship paints a complicated and overloaded scene made worse by outside pressures. Mrs. Stratton and Miss Brown form the nucleus of a student service group at Kensington that, on a part-time basis, includes a counselor, a speech therapist, and a school psychologist. The five link forces in the first days of the school year to complete a rigorous testing program for all new or specially referred students.

Their testing headquarters is set up at one end of Kensington's resource and library center. Another corner temporarily stations the school nurse who measures the height and weight of all new students. The remainder of the library is supervised by Miss Bessie Church.

Bessie spends the first day of school cataloging new additions to the library collection and generally completing preparations for the library's opening. If there were a single but unofficial keeper of the ship's log, it would certainly be Bessie. She is forever ready to reveal Kensington's past to anyone willing to listen. Her personality, central location, and the open space, combined with the freedom to float among the staff during the day, explain her role in the school.

Finally, we meet Dr. Jonas Wales, the principal who is assuming command of Kensington for the first time. On this day, a teacher recounts with laughter the astonished face of a small kindergarten child who slowly surveyed the new principal from toe to head. Eyes wide, mouth agape, the child's only comment was, "He's big!" Standing straight, with closely clipped hair, Wales talks comfortably through a rural drawl. He epitomizes the authority image of an elementary school principal. After blinking the teachers' lounge lights--the order to cast off--he spends the first day surveying his ship and admiring the job of his capable crew.

Crosscurrents in Kensington's Course

This first view of the Kensington School today offers a severe contrast with the promise of the "lighthouse" school we captured in our first study.

> The setting was the Kensington School, a unique architectural structure with open-space laboratory suites, an instructional materials center, and a theatre. . . . The program exemplified the new elementary education of team teaching, individualized instruction, and multi-aged groups. A broad strategy of innovation--the alternative of grandeur . . . was devised and implemented. The intended outcome was pupil development toward maturity--self-directed, internally motivated, and productive competence.
>
> (Smith and Keith, 1971, p.v)

Our current look at the school reveals that the building and grounds have deteriorated from structures that aroused visions of classical Greece. Today, the image stirs sadness in many who saw Kensington's original physical structure; its visage inspires descriptions of "dirty" and "tired," or "tacky Holiday Inn."

In addition to the changes in the building, our vignettes reveal other differences between the present Kensington and the old. A group of experienced teachers begin the year with an obvious emphasis on imposed rules. Buses deliver many of the children who live more than a mile from what was once a neighborhood school. Sixty percent of the children are black. The original student body was almost entirely white. The day begins with a patriotic gesture familiar to nearly anyone who has attended a traditional American school. No special or imaginative opening day activity is witnessed--as might have been expected from the 1964-65 program. Instead, students begin or continue any of several commercial textbook series in math, social studies, reading, and spelling.

Moreover, a new and conservative principal stands ready to back his discipline-oriented teachers. A special service teacher, whose work is financed by a separate government agency, coordinates with Kensington's own remedial reading teacher in an apparently futile attempt to serve large numbers of students with learning difficulties. Those teachers fret over an impending inspection of their records by a federal agency. They ponder what to do with an unruly student rejected by a local parochial school. A team of staffers headed by a school psychologist applies standardized tests to the very youngest of students to assess the children's readiness and special needs.

Thus, retrospectively, change carried by multiple crosscurrents in Kensington's environment has seeped into every aspect of the school's program. The crew, for the most part old hands, displays abundant humor and tenacious energy for the students, but today's activities are guided by different mandates, opinions, perspectives, and conditions than we found at the school 15 years ago. The following chapters recount Kensington's course through those currents in more detail.

CHAPTER 2

KENSINGTON'S TURBULENT ENVIRONMENT

Storm Warnings

The first chapter demonstrates many of the changes that occurred at the Kensington School during our 15-year absence. Most were noticeable almost immediately as we began our follow-up study. Those changes substantiated the prediction of Smith and Keith that Kensington would revert to the "old Milford type." But the school continues to pursue the education of the children charged to it. The actual complexity of that task, however, is difficult to appreciate without an examination of Kensington's stormy context.

Months of recent newspaper headlines about schools in and around the Milford district--Kensington's district--reveal the turbulence there.

January, 1980	Milford Again Faces Shrinkage Problems
February, 1980	Parents Want Back to Basics
	Handicapped Denied Rights, Parents Say
March, 1980	Patrons Pressure Milford Board, Inject Racial Issues
	Federal Project for Disadvantaged Students Explained
	2 Seeking School Posts in Milford Charge [Racial] Bias
April, 1980	Two Black Board Candidates Ask U.S. Justice Department to Investigate Allegations of Racial Discrimination

	Racial Mix, Enrollment Drop Vie for Milford District Priorities
	School Closing, Boundaries Change
May, 1980	Midwest City Students Protest on Desegregation School Plan
	Reverend Wants to Start Private School in Midwest City
	School Security Workshop A Success at Milford
	Milford Still Reeling from Test Scores [report on drastic drop]
	Milford Students Stage Day of Concern [over tax hike defeats]
June, 1980	Parents Protest at Milford [over staff changes]
	District Enrollment Drops, Deficit Spending, Fewer Jobs for Teachers
	Milford Board Tries to Preserve "Neighborhood School" Concept
	School Desegregation Becomes Topic in [National Senate] Political Races
	State's Role in School Desegregation Disputed
July, 1980	New Milford Budget Will Tap Reserves
	Milford Board Will Resubmit Tax Levy
August, 1980	Strike Threat Hangs Over Milford
	Milford Asked to Ban "White-Flight" Pupils
	County Gets Deadline on Integration Plans
	School Closes, District Enrollment Drops 358 Students
October, 1980	School Tax Increase Defeated
	Poll Shows Midwest State's Citizens Oppose Metropolitan Desegregation Plan

This list illustrates that integration, declining enrollments, education for the handicapped, limited resources, school closings, union disputes, unpassed tax levies, declining test scores, the back-to-basics movement, and disagreements over the legitimacy of state and federal agendas for local schools are all part of the contemporary world of the Kensington school. In short, it seems a microcosm of the troubles that plague today's public schools.

This constellation of problems is composed of multiple levels of interdependent national, state, and local activities. Further, each level has a historical dimension as well. We call this multi-leveled conception of Kensington's context "Longitudinal Nested Systems" (Smith, Prunty, & Dwyer, 1981). In this chapter we begin at the national and state level and consider some of the historical events and attitudes that helped shape government policies regarding education and that resulted in major points of contention within schools today. Similarly, we examine changes within the Milford community and in district personnel that have confounded Kensington's task over the years.

We believe that the contemporary Kensington exemplifies both the product and the process of the multiple policy forces at work in schools today. Its story emphasizes that the context of schooling is subject to continuous shifts in opinion and policy, and that sailing a course through that environment is most likely to remain a difficult task.

Federal Involvement in Public Education

Perhaps the most distant level of context from the daily routines of Kensington best demonstrates the uncertain waters on which the school sails. In recent years the ever increasing role of the federal government in education has become a commonly accepted fact, despite continued debate about the legitimacy of that intervention (Bailey and Mosher, 1968). The debate has been heightened by the arrival of the Reagan administration, which is trying to extricate the federal government from the business of public education. At this point, a 20-year tide of rising influence in public schools seems to be turned. A brief review of the relevant history of those two decades provides an excellent example of how judicial, legislative, professional, and private interest groups contend to affect the drift of educational policy in this country.

Prior to 1960 the federal government's role in local education was primarily one of encouragement of local and state programs. In general, all attempts to develop legislation to permit extensive aid to elementary and secondary education failed. There were few exceptions. One such exception was the Lanham Act of 1940 which was passed only in the context of great need brought about by World War II. Thomas (1975) describes that bill.

> The Lanham Act of 1940 authorized federal funds for the construction, maintenance, and operaton of schools in communities confronted with increased populations as a result of the defense effort. (p. 20)

The act provided precedence for future federal legislation to aid affected areas. A second example of limited encroachment of federal aid to education was also developed in the wake of the war. For the first time, the government provided aid to returning individual servicemen to educate or retrain them. The aid was seen as a way to reintegrate soldiers into a peacetime society. It was not interpreted as federal aid to educational institutions. This type of aid has been extended to veterans ever since, although the Reagan administration has discussed placing more stringent regulations on such awards.

Legislation to provide general aid to education consistently ran into three barriers: a) fear that federal aid would mean federal control of schools; b) desire to separate church and state; and c) fear of forced integration. Two converging forces allowed the federal govenment to get its proverbial foot in the door. The first force was economic. The postwar baby boom necessitated rapid expansion of public school facilities in a period of postwar inflation. Simply put, districts needed money to build schools. The second force was communism, or a fear of communism. The cold war coupled with the U.S.S.R.'s successful Sputnik launchings suddenly placed education in a new light: education could serve the nation's defense interests.

The first responses to those forces were: a) the National Science Foundation Act, which provided aid in higher education to encourage activities related to the promotion of research, scientific exchange between countries, and improved teaching of science, mathematics and foreign languages; and b) the passage of two public laws which authorized payments to school districts for school construction and operating expenses. But by far the most significant piece of legislation was the National Defense Education Act of 1958, enacted under the shadow of the orbiting Sputnik. Thomas, again, describes the situation.

> The implication drawn from the spectacular Soviet feat was that American education, especially in the areas of science and technology, was inadequate. The sense of emergency was sufficiently strong that Congress passed the act with minimal controversy after President Eisenhower sent a special message to Congress requesting a $1.6 billion program. . . . In signing the bill, President Eisenhower emphasized that its purpose was to strengthen the American

> education system so that it could "meet the broad and increasing demands imposed on it by consideration of basic national security." (p. 23)

In the early 1960s, Kennedy's administration was intent on domestic reform and education was part of the overall plan. His administration was joined by the intellectual and moral leaders of the country to produce an aura of American invincibility in providing technical and economic aid both at home and abroad to enhance the quality of life of those who were left out of the American mainstream. Skolnick and Currie (1979) write of that era:

> Americans were becoming aware of an "underdeveloped" world abroad and a "disadvantaged" world at home, both unhappily excluded from the benefits of an age of general "affluence" and well-being. New agencies of social improvement were created at home and abroad. A critique of old-style welfare efforts began to develop, along with the notion of "helping people help themselves." . . . The idea of inclusion, of participation, in the American way of life became a political metaphor for the age. . . . The social problems of the 1960s would be solved by extending the technological and intellectual resources of established American institutions into excluded, deprived, or underdeveloped places and groups. (pp. 6-7)

Iannaccone (1981) comments on the country's economic outlook that coincided with Kennedy's "New Frontier."

> The years after World War II were ones of sustained economic growth for the United States. American industrial productivity, high at the end of the war, continued to grow. Low cost energy fueled it. Japanese and Western European economies devastated by the war offered no significant competition. (p. 55.)

In short, the country was poised for social reform and education was a key element of the process.

Although the Kennedy administration did not realize a comprehensive federal aid bill for education, several pieces of legislation helped set new precedents. Those bills included the Higher Education Facilities Act, the Vocational Education Act and the Library Construction Act. Collectively, they represented a de-emphasis of the national security concern of the fifties and originated two new thrusts. One, the bills provided aid to the disadvantaged, the poverty stricken, the minorities. Two, the bills were able to shunt funds to private and religious institutions as long as funds were not directly used to construct religious facilities. The bills indicated that the old barriers could be hurdled and paved the road to President Johnson's "Great Society."

A change of strategy, a shift in emphasis, and the enactment of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 led to the fait accompli of extensive federal aid to education. The new strategy came from President Johnson's advisors who decided that federal aid should be aimed at solving specific problems rather than be given for general use. The new emphasis on "the war on poverty," and Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 prohibited racial discrimination in all federally assisted programs. These elements combined to provide a new guise for federal aid to education. First, the fear of federal control of local schools was lessened by the goal-directed rhetoric of the developing legislation. Second, the state versus religion controversy was sidestepped by the fact that federal funds would be aimed at the impoverished, whatever their religion, forcing opponents into the uncomfortable position of representing those who wished to keep the poor forever dependent. Finally, Title VI guaranteed equal disbursement of aid regardless of race. The successful legislation that emerged was entitled the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (ESEA). Dershimer (1976) describes its unusual progress from bill to law:

> With almost unprecedented haste, the Congress passed the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, in the House by a margin of 263 to 153 and in the Senate by 78 to 18. President Johnson signed the bill into law (P.L. 89-10) on April 11, 1965, in his own one-room schoolhouse in Texas. The next day, the White House was filled with invited supporters of education who heard him say: "I think Congress has passed the most significant education bill in the history of Congress." (p. 67)

The first ESEA bill contained five titles. Their intents are summarized below:

> Title I provided for a three-year program to support the education of disadvantaged children.
>
> Title II authorized five years of support to public and private schools for the purchase of library resources, texts, and instructional materials.
>
> Title III and IV provided for general improvements in the quality of American education by offering grants to local and regional organizations for establishment of educational centers and laboratories and to universities for education related research.
>
> Title V provided for the strengthening of state departments of education.

In the fiscal year 1966, the first year of ESEA's implementation, Congress approved a budget of 1.225 billion dollars to fund ESEA's programs. The stature that Johnson attached to the act was clearly appropriate. ESEA remains the most significant expansion of federal involvement in education to date.

Over the next ten years confidence in the federal government's ability to care for the impoverished and the underprivileged waivered. There seem to be several significant political and economic realities which might account for the disaffection. A *Time* staff editorial speaks of the jaded view of the youth of the period and mentions several devastating events.

> The young of the '60s were raised to believe that America was a splendidly virtuous country. When they found--through the Bay of Pigs, Selma, the assassinations, Viet Nam--that it was something more ambiguous, they rose up in a horror that now seems touching in its spontaneity. They joined in immense numbers--the baby boom's demographic bulge--and without philosophy or program. That was the strength and ultimate weakness of the movement: it arose out of moral outrage and indignation, and grew larger precisely because it was so formless. When the production ran out of moral energy, it collapsed like a dying star. (August 15, 1977, pp. 67-68)

Less emotionally, Iannaccone (1981) contrasts the negative economic condition that dawned in the 1970s to the very favorable situation that coincided with the Kennedy era. He finds in the economy reason enough for the public's growing distress over federal initiatives.

> From the late 1960s on these [favorable] socioeconomic conditions reversed. The ideological interpretations which had focused on the central governmental solutions of the problems had played themselves out. Energy became expensive as America became dependent on foreign oil. The international trade balance became consistently unfavorable. American productivity fell significantly below many other industrial nations. Savings from a previous era were depleted. Stagflation, inflation in costs with continued lowering productivity, characterized the economic systems. (pp. 55-56)

Skolnick and Currie (1979) further describe contemporary issues as they account for the public's loss of faith in the venerable American institutions.

> Inflation. Unemployment. Energy crises. Decline of the dollar. Tax revolt. Bankrupt cities. Political corruption and business bribery as routine news items. . . . It is no longer a secret that the American system has not worked the way we were taught it should. (p. 1)

During this period of waning public trust, the federal government continued its campaign to support and intervene in public education. The government's agenda and its determination that their policies be followed grew. Before 1978 four more titles were added to the original ESEA, including special provisions for the handicapped, bilingual education, and other ethnic heritage programs. In 1978, Public Law 95-561, Education Amendments, reorganized, revamped and once again added to the ESEA purview. In 1980, a total of 15 ESEA Titles spelled out the government's programs. The continued passage of other federal legislation (for example, Public Law 94-142, Federal Education for All Handicapped Children Act of 1975) continued to strengthen the wave of federalism in education. All of this legislation follows the same basic Johnson formula and, until very recently, spelled out the federal government's educational policy. In brief that policy can be written: aid shall be directed to specific groups of children with specific problems, i.e., the poor, the handicapped, the bilingual, etc.; aid shall be used to encourage and assist local and state programs; aid will not supplant or deter local and state initiations.

The surety with which authors believed that this federal policy was entrenched in American society despite other changes is exemplified by a lengthy quote from Savage (1978).

> In education at least, the Congress of the late 1970s is conservative/liberal. That is, it follows the basic liberal assumptions of the Great Society era, but is quite conservative in refusing to tamper with those assumptions. Perhaps this conservatism, or stability if you prefer, shouldn't be a surprise. Unlike the commissioners of education, who come and go as often as managers of last-place baseball teams, the Congressional leadership doesn't fluctuate. The key members of the House have been associated with education policy since the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) first passed Congress in 1965. . . .
>
> The stability of Congress--and of its education policy--can be seen in another way. When President Kennedy first proposed a massive program of federal aid to education, the idea

> was hotly debated across the country and in Congress. After a bitter floor fight, the bill was voted down. Only after the Johnson landslide of 1964 did ESEA pass Congress, and only then cloaked as an anti-poverty measure. Recently, "reformers" have talked much of "sunset legislation," meaning a law would be passed for a certain period of time--perhaps five years--and would go out of existence afterward unless Congress debated it and reaffirmed the program. A fine idea, except this is already done, in theory. ESEA has been extended in 1968, 1974 and now in 1978.
>
> But the reauthorization of 1978 had little to do with the 1965 battle. This time there was no real debate. No one seriously questioned whether the federal government should pump billions of dollars into local schools, whether the billions spent made any difference in how much children learned, or whether the money should be distributed in a significantly different way. The assumptions of 1965 emerged again unchanged, and almost unchallenged. One witness said ESEA had been an "unquestioned success." He was, literally, correct. (pp. 5-6)

This perception of stability seems radically altered by the sweeping national elections of 1980. The political visions of President Reagan which contrast so markedly with those of his predecessors, the return of the Senate to a Republican majority, an apparent transition to more traditional and provincial values by a large segment of society, and, most importantly, the serious decline of the American economy have set the stage for a revolution in federal level educational policy. Most simply, the Reagan administration sees education as a responsibility of state and local governments and intervention by the federal government as undue meddling. This altered federal picture is summed up by Iannaccone (1981).

> The problems of education will not be central to the major political issues the Reagan administration and GOP leadership face. The stamp of irrelevance will

> be placed on them rather than of opposition. . . . The basic political issue ahead is whether the 1980 realignment election will be converted into a lasting mandate by Reagan and the GOP. . . . In the process the politics of education ahead will be shaped. My prediction is that the most significant aspect of these will be in the management of conflicts between states and local districts. (p. 59)

Thus, the once advancing wave of federalism in education very possibly has been turned back. The consequences of the drastic change in policy, however, are yet to be seen. Before dismissing federal influence on local schools as history, we must wait to see the legislative and judicial responses to the Reagan point of view. Pending court cases regarding issues such as school busing and desegregation, special education for the handicapped, and aid to private education may be the battlefields for the resolution of conflicts concerning the federal role in education. As the list of headlines that begin this chapter demonstrates, each of these issues is part of the vortex that characterizes the Milford district today.

The State Role

The ebb and flow of federal authority in public education contrasts with the steady stream of state influence. Again, important events are so recent that it will be many years before a trend is clear, but the Reagan initiatives seem to indicate an increased and more traditional role for the state. Thomas (1975) illustrates the age-old roots of that traditional conception, citing a pre-revolution mandate.

> Historically, public education as a local responsibility and a state function can be traced to two statutes of the Massachusetts Bay Colony. . . . These laws required that local communities establish schools (in which Bible reading would naturally be a major activity), in order to prevent Old Deluder, Satan, from corrupting the youth of the colony. (p. 19)

Although responsibility for children's souls has slipped the purview of the public school, the impetus for state and local control of schools remains a strong and contentious force in the shaping of educational policy.

The localists were not immediately dissuaded even by the drafting and ratification of the United States Constitution since that document did not address the topic of education. Only the passage of the Tenth Amendment in 1791 significantly altered the picture. That amendment permitted the states prerogatives not mandated by the Constitution or expressly forbidden by it. Thus, public schooling fell under the aegis of the individual states. Since that time, many court cases have established public education as a state function. Edwards (1933) explicates the logic of state sponsored schooling:

> In legal theory the public school is a state institution. Public education is not merely a function of government; it is government. Power to maintain a system of public schools is an attribute of government in much the same sense as is the police power to administer justice, or to maintain military forces, or to tax. The state finds its right to tax for the maintenance of a system of public schools in its duty to promote the public welfare, the good order and peace of society. The function of the public school, in legal theory at least, is not to confer benefits upon the individual as such; the school exists as a state institution because the very existence of civil society demands it. The education of youth is a matter of such vital importance to the democratic state and to the public weal that the state may do much, may go very far indeed, by way of limiting the control of the parent over the education of his child. The state cannot, to be sure, prohibit private schools altogether but it can prohibit the teachings of doctrines which challenge the existence of the state and the well-being of society. It may, moreover, require that children be educated in schools which meet substantially the same standards as the state requires of its own schools. (pp. 1-2)

Despite this resounding argument, advocates of individual community control prevented the formation of tightly controlled state systems of schooling. The state system of education that evolved is visible evidence of compromise between the two prevailing perspectives. In general, state legislatures create state departments of education to which are delegated each state's responsibility for creation, operation, management, and maintenance of schools (Drury, 1967). School districts are established within states according to state guidelines. Within those districts, however, local boards are elected and given the authority to administer the district's schools. Although the boards are deemed to be state agencies, they are permitted a large measure of autonomy in their duties. Even though the boards are comprised of local community members, their offices exist entirely separately from local or municipal bodies. Local executives (mayors, for instance) have no legal prerogative to intervene in public school affairs.

Despite their legal authority to run schools, the states' involvement beyond the creation of districts was reluctant. The fierce preservation of education as a community concern countermanded much of the potency of the legislation. Furthermore, states resisted assuming financial responsibility for a tightly controlled system of state schools, increased taxation would discourage the growth of business and industry. This was a particularly powerful argument for the new states of eighteenth and nineteenth century America. Despite resistance, compelling forces moved the states inevitably towards greater involvement in education.

One such force was the ideal of universal education. This notion became entrenched in the minds of the public during the colonial period and spread with the states during the country's expansionist era. The doctrine of universal education held that in order for schools to be truly universal, they must be secular, free, and compulsory. These givens compounded with the rapid urbanization of the late 1800s provided the impetus for more state control of education. Martin (1962) summarizes the shift:

> Notwithstanding a general reluctance to do so, the states have assumed more and more active roles in public education since about 1850, and there has been an acceleration in this movement during the last four decades. In general, state-local educational relations have been affected by three major developments. The first witnessed the setting by the state of minimum standards in the domain, first, of teacher certification. Next the state undertook to influence the selection of textbooks in the interest of standardization, sometimes supplying the books outright but more often establishing eligible lists from which textbooks were to be chosen. Finally, increasing control came to be exercised over the subjects taught. Having established standards over the years, the states then created a system of supervision to ensure that the standards were met. (pp. 6-7)

A great deal has happened since states first began to legislate standards for public schools. Since their early regulation of teacher certification, text selection, and requisite course work, states have gone on to control many other aspects of schooling. Figure 2.1 taken from the table of contents of a National Institute of Education document entitled State Legal Standards for the Provision of Public Education (1978), lists areas of education presently legislated by state governments.

Insert Figure 2.1 about here.

Admission Requirements
Adult Education
Attendance Enforcement Agent
Attendance Requirements
Curriculum
Extracurricular Activities
Grade Organization
Guidance and Counseling Program
High School Graduation Requirements
Individual Pupil Records
In-service Training
Libraries
Promotion Requirements
Pupil Load-Class Size
Pupil-Teacher Ratio
Pupil Transportation
Safety and Health Requirements
School Calendar
Teacher Personnel Policies
Textbooks
General Teacher Certification
Administrative Officers' Certification
Existing Certification Requirements by Job Title

Figure 2.1: Areas of State Regulation in Public Schools (from *State Legal Standards for the Provision of Public Education*, 1978)

The trend towards increased state control of education is clear. Bailey, Frost, Marsh and Wood (1962) similarly conclude:

> In a highly interdependent, technological world, the myth of local control of educational policy is increasingly unrealistic. (p. 11)

Even though the drive for greater federal control of education appears lessened under the Reagan administration, the assumption that states will move quickly or easily to fill the void may be premature. As Finn (1981) writes:

> The "block grant" proposals that finally emerged from the White House crammed education into the same organizational mold as health and social services, revealing either childish insistence on symmetry or stunning ignorance of the fact that, alone among the major human resources programs, most important decisions about schooling are made at the local level, that state-local relationships are varied and intricate, and that turning the federal money over to the states invites as much red tape, regulation, and bureaucracy as continuing to run the programs from Washington. (p. 20)

Thus, the course of education depends not only on the emergence of a clear and continuous federal policy, but also on the resolution by states and their constituent school districts of funding problems and state versus community conflicts.

Prevailing Local Conditions

We have been working through an admittedly long digression, exploring the most distal levels of the Kensington School's nested organizational and social system. Our purpose has been to paint the tenuous and shifting context of education in this country as a backdrop for the Kensington drama, the story of the school's striking changes.

Now we can move one step closer to the school. We can flesh out the story with actors who committed themselves singly or in numbers to implement a creditable school system for the Milford youngsters and to consider the changes in the community whose growth spawned the need for those schools--all within the broader national and state context. This story will reveal that the pilots of the Milford School District were traditionalists at heart who pursued the best of what conservative ideas about education always represent. The one exception was the "outsider," Dr. Steven Spanman--the designer of the Kensington dream--who arrived at Milford in a brief period of national euphoria and who was able to infect the community with that spirit despite the local conflict in which it was embroiled. In the ultimate flow of Milford's history, however, his contribution made only a small ripple as the district's conservative bent was swelled by an apparent return nationally to more provincial values.

In the early years of the century, Milford operated a single two-room rural school governed by a three-member Board of Education. In the 1920's, the district grew in size and numbers, changed its status to a six-director board, began a high school, and built an elementary school, the Attucks, for Black children. In 1928, Milford appointed its first superintendent of schools, Mrs. Claire Briggs. That event, though far removed in time from the Kensington School, began the lineage of superintendents who acted to shape the district and its schools. Mrs. Briggs is important in that story because she contrasted with the completely male dominated administrations which followed her up to the present time.

Prior to her brief tenure as Superintendent, 1928-1930, she started the new Milford High School and served as a teacher/principal. Her termination resulted from alleged conflicts with children, teachers, and the board of education. One member of the first high school graduating class (1931) in an interview described her personality as "forceful" and "abrasive." Another member of the class, with good humor, phrased his perceptions more metaphorically: "When she said 'frog,' you jumped."

When the moment came for Brigg's termination, the board spoke of rapid expansion as cause for dismissal.

> Our district is growing so rapidly and we are in the midst of a building program this year and we feel keenly the need of a man at the head of our school system. (Doc., 1930)

Thus, the responsibilities of the superintendent were changing in complexity and gravity; the job was considered too demanding for a woman by the early board.

Only two superintendents filled the position between Mrs. Briggs and Dr. Spanman who set the stage for Kensington's construction in 1964. The first, Mr. Fred Grey, served between 1930 and 1935. He died unexpectedly, a young man. Mr. Walter McBride followed him and held the office for 27 years. McBride assumed the office during the Great Depression and remained at the post beyond the cold war period and Sputnik's far-reaching launch. The end of McBride's tenure and its circumstances bear critically on Kensington's origin and its eventual reversion to the old Milford type.

The board attempted to replace McBride amid considerable strife and controversy. The conflict crystalized in the spring of 1961 after three new members were elected to the Milford Board of Education. Each was without previous school board experience. Three months later, by unanimous request, the board called for the resignation of McBride, citing that he "had failed to carry out board policies and procedures." No specific examples were listed. McBride refused to comply.

The impasse was significantly affected by an unprecedented move of a young social studies teacher, Ron George. As president of the local teachers' organization, he appealed to his organization to request that the National Educational Association (NEA) enter into the district's dilemma as an impartial fact-finding commission. His motion read:

> Be it moved by the Milford Community Teachers Association that the Suburban County Teachers Association, the Midwest State Teachers Association and the National Educational Association be asked to set up a fact finding group which would study the current controversial situation existing between the Board of Education and the Superintendent of Milford School District.
>
> Such group to act as impartial fact-finder and to submit a report of its findings and recommendations to the Board of Education, the Superintendent, the Staff and the Community. (Doc., 1961)

A copy of the motion and an accompanying letter dated September 11, 1961, was sent to the president of the board. The letter indicated that George's motion had passed by an "overwhelming majority." It concluded with the sentence:

> We trust that you will hear from each of these organizations soon and will accept this resolution in the spirit in which it is offered. (Doc., 1961)

Responding to George's request, the NEA Commission on Rights and Responsibilities interceded on McBride's behalf. A letter, directed to the President of the Milford Board of Education by the Commission read:

> As emphasized in the statement, we hope you will recognize the need for deliberate action by both sides in the proposals made. The undignified treatment to which Mr. McBride has been submitted does not affect him as an individual alone,--it is considered an affront to all the professional personnel in the school system. Under the circumstances the Board of Education has nothing to lose and

> considerable to gain in finding a solution to the situation that will remove a good deal of the bitterness from the present conditions and make possible an immediate step toward a more wholesome administrative situation. (Doc., 11/61)

Later, the commission wrote:

> It was not the purpose of this inquiry to determine whether or not the Superintendent was capable of performing his total responsibilities. It appears to many members of the professional staff and to many citizens, however, that it is nothing short of tragic for a man who has devoted twenty-six years of service to the school system to end his career under extremely embarassing and unhappy conditions. No information was presented from any source to indicate that there had been any dramatic change in the personality, mental, or physical ability that would warrant such contemptuous treatment of the chief administrative officer of the school system. (Doc., 11/61)

Near the end of the fracas, the commission developed several lines of argument which sketched the breadth and depth of the problem and the serious nature of the conflict. They indicated multiple necessary aspects of an immediate solution which could at the same time prevent future conflicts of a similar nature. Eventually, agreement was reached between Superintendent McBride and the board which reflected the substance of the NEA Commission's recommendations. The superintendency was vacated and McBride was hired for the remainder of his original contract as a consultant to the district. One who worked with McBride commented that he was reassigned office space which amounted to not much more than a "broom closet." The resolution of this incident led to the search for the next superintendent.

To pause for a moment, we might review for emphasis several aspects of this controversy and its solution. First, there was the tremendous turmoil that existed over the replacement of the superintendent. Second, the interplay between the Milford community, the board of education, and the district professional staff led to the election of new board members. The new board initiated change in policy, personnel and administration. Their actions further precipitated reactions by McBride, and the community teachers' organization under the leadership of Ronald George. Third, the teachers' organization became an important element in district affairs for the first time. Fourth, an outside professional committee, again for the first time, was influential in district affairs. Fifth, one of the Commission's recommendations was to search outside the district for the next superintendent. By seeking someone unconnected with the conflict, the possibility of hiring an "inside candidate" was precluded. Sixth, by working with a selection committee of outside consultants, a contemporary version of the national "old boys network," Milford was connected to the men who trained, selected, and controlled careers and job placements of most of the major superintendencies in the country. And seventh, the final contenders who emerged from the selection process were bright, young, ambitious and cosmopolitan men with outstanding qualifications. From our theoretical perspective these key events in the transition from McBride to his successor set the occasion for the ripple in the traditional stream of Milford's history which included the designing, building, and staffing of the Kensington School.

To resume our chronology, the McBride era had included the closing of the district's school for Black children, Attucks. The board mandate that closed the school responded to a ruling of the state's attorney general. The state level edict followed closely the 1954 Brown vs. Topeka Supreme Court ruling that ended segregated public schools. McBride had also seen the district classified as a Federally Impacted

Area, which enabled the schools to apply for funds to build schools. As the community's population swelled, the district had constructed eight new schools. His era closed in a time of community growth and optimism. The nation, too, swelled with pride from early space-flight successes and a successful standoff with Russia over missiles in Cuba, and eagerly anticipated Kennedy's "New Frontier."

A majority of Milford's Board of Education--but not all--sought a new, young, dynamic superintendent to lead the district in this hopeful time. Steven P. Spanman, Ed. D., burst upon the scene ready and willing for a challenge, a young man clearly on the move, a rising star. Interpersonally, he was impressive and charismatic. Dr. Spanman was described as "a man who could talk the birds out of the trees." (TI, 1980) He promised to bring a quality, future-oriented education to the boys and girls of Milford.

Milford's community news letters give a fascinating view of The Spanman era. Spanman's editions provide a striking contrast with the routine reporting of bus schedules, high school sports calendars, home coming events, etc., of previous issues. Instead, his sweeping headlines portray an educational utopia, down the road and around the very next corner. In an early edition he urged his staff to prepare for the future:

> New ideas, new ways of living and new technology require new and equally challenging ideas in education. Teachers must be aware of their added responsibilities because of these changes. (Doc., 1962)

The impact of Dr. Spanman on the small Milford community was nothing less than spectacular. In two short years he arrived, found fertile soil for his ideas and proceeded at a blinding pace to commit the district to a million dollar construction agenda, entertained national educational figures, placed the district in the national media limelight, involved his teachers in an ambitious and exhausting in-service program, altered the traditional district curriculum, and rallied parents to his causes. As we indicated in the earlier account, Anatomy of Educational Innovation, his pace was too fast for many and his "parade" was left behind. An essential part of that parade was the old Milford administrators. As an outsider, he was never able to rally them to his cause.

It remains speculation whether Dr. Spanman read the handwriting on the wall--the shifting political and economic climate in the district--or whether opportunity knocked fortuitously, but, still only 35 years old, he was provided a face-saving exit; he received an opportunity to spend a year with National Foundation, a prestigious, innovative educational organization. In the spring of 1966, the annual school board elections occurred with their seasonal regularity. A disgruntled board member, who had been faced down by Dr. Spanman earlier, was joined by two new members. The new men were supporters of the earlier, more traditional McBride perspective of the district. Once again, the power shifted. One of Dr. Spanman's remaining supporters, who had the Superintendent's resignation in hand, submitted it. Spanman never returned to Milford. Eventually he moved on to a major city superintendency. Kensington, of course, had been constructed; it was Spanman's legacy to the district.

Dr. Ronald George quietly became superintendent of Milford on May 27, 1966. One of four candidates from inside the district, Dr. George was voted in on a 4 to 2 split decision of the board. He was offered a one-year contract. The new superintendent had taught elementary and junior high school in the district for a dozen years, and recently had completed a doctorate in education at City University. George's uneventful rise to superintendent was in contrast to his earlier district activities. During the turmoil of 1961-62, when the board and district had attempted to oust Superintendent McBride, the teachers' organization had become a major force in determining district policy. Ronald George was the organization's outspoken president.

Dr. George's activities in that conflict had earned him an infamous place in the record of the board's proceedings. Their minutes clearly indicated that they had not entirely approved of his interventions.

> Mr. Henderson moved that junior high school teacher, Ronald George, not be re-employed for the school year 1962-63, because of his contemptuous attitude toward board members, his irrational behavior in public, and his totally unprofessional behavior. Mr. Obermeir seconded the motion. . . . The motion failed. (Doc., 4/62)

Ronald George was able to hold on, retain his position and gain stature over the next few years through the teacher organization. The same board power shift that indicated the end of the line for Spanman created the opening for George. It is ironic that he was both instrumental in the process that led to the hiring of Spanman with the resultant liberal change in district agendas, and, as Spanman's replacement, became the leader of the district's conservative re-consolidation. Today, Dr. George remains Milford's superintendent.

In effect, Milford's "back to basics" period began earlier than did the national trend. The cluster of tighter control and discipline, self-contained classrooms, use of text books as curriculum, and assign-study-recitation teaching methods which characterized George's agenda for the schools was also part of the mandate the board presented to George at the time of his appointment. In an important sense, this reemergence of traditional teaching methods presented no problem because the majority of Spanman's appointments had departed. This meant, in effect, that Dr. George's central office staff were individuals, as was he, from the earlier McBride era. They were localists and traditionalists in the best sense of those words.

The pace of events in the Milford district slowed in the first part of Dr. George's continuing tenure. Kensington was the last school built in the Milford district. For a while, conflicts over bond issues and tax levies took on a less pressing and emotionally charged quality. The size of the district student body continued to grow but at a slower rate. The teaching staff was still riding on the salary increase of previous years, inflation was under reasonable control, and the fact that purchasing power was gradually eroding was little noticed.

In our view, some of the most important variables that altered this relative lull in Kensington's stormy environment and which greatly influenced the school's program were demographic changes, especially population shifts. They were important items even as they set problems Mrs. Briggs "could not handle" early in the district's history, and they consumed the energies of everyone in the 1952-64 period of "population explosion." Now, in the second half of George's tenure, they again influence all aspects of the district's business. Again, these changes seem born of currents generated in the nested systems of Milford's and Kensington's context, and over which the school has no control.

On our first return to Milford as this study began we commented on the tremendous change in the appearance of the community.

> Larder Road is totally changed and it's now a highway. . . . I've just passed the school which is on my left. The flag is flying and the kids are out on the playground. . . . Everything else is totally built up. I can't get over all of the apartments, the new subdivisions of small houses . . . just everywhere. (FN, 3/77)

In our fifteen year absence, Milford underwent a transformation through extensive land development. Perhaps with nostalgia, one can still view at one corner of the Kensington's play yard a stable and small farm. But few other reminders of Milford's rural roots remain. Numerous apartment complexes, subdivisions of small, inexpensive homes, shopping malls and greatly expanded roads and highways characterize most of the community.

Most of this wave of construction occurred during the late 1950s and early in the 1960s. It coincided with a county-wide boom in business and industry and the white middle class migration from Metropolitan City to the suburbs. But the bulk of the construction of the large apartment complexes came later, beginning around 1964 and continuing to the present. In the middle years of the 1970s, the Milford community qualified for federal housing support which made the apartments affordable for minority families who sought better living conditions than those provided by the deteriorating areas in the inner-city. The resultant population shift left Kensington School 60% Black, when just a few years before only a few isolated Black students had attended the school. The community as a whole became segregated with a major highway separating the predominantly White neighborhoods from the few integrated or the predominantly Black areas.

During this flux, there were many instances of school boundary changes in the district, but one set of schools in the district remained mostly

White while others became 60-95% Black. Despite the number of Black students which now comprise the schools, there has never been a Black person elected to the Milford Board of Education. Two Black women recently running for election were overwhelmingly defeated. District wide, there is one Black administrator, an assistant principal. The district remains dedicated to a neighborhood concept of schooling. In short, despite federal and state efforts towards integration, in this area Milford steers a steady course. That steadfastness, ironically, is a major factor that may add to Milford's future turbulence.

Beyond the racial issues confronting Milford, the community is suffering a declining population and the same gloomy economic outlook at which the rest of the country presently stares. Schools close and businesses and industries die out or move, seeking greener pastures. The result is a decline in Milford's tax base, and attempts to levy higher rates on the property owners who remain are overwhelmingly defeated. As the student population drops and schools are closed, teachers are dismissed. This issue joined by frustration over the district's inability to raise teacher salaries, which are already suffering from inflation, fuels militancy in the teachers' organization and spawns the threat of teacher strikes.

These are the local environmental factors which form Kensington's most immediate context today. Joined by the seemingly more conservative mood of the nation and its leadership, and Milford's own conservative reconsolidation led by Dr. George, an almost irresistable cross current sweeps across Kensington's prow. These conditions, in part, explain Kensington today. They explain the origin of the issues alluded to by the headlines which opened this chapter. And they foreshadow the course the school may sail in the future.

Summary

In summary, we see the contemporary context of the Kensington School evolving through 70 years of conflict argued at national, state and local levels in judicial chambers, legislative halls and board rooms. Against this background the Milford community opened its first school and later appointed its first superintendent. Milford's school board resolved to have its schools led by a man because of the increasing demands of the job. The district opened and 30 years later closed a separate school for Black children. Milford received ever increasing levels of financial assistance from the federal government beginning with aid to fund a massive school construction enterprise designed to cope with the student pressures of the post World War II baby boom.

Later, the Milford Board, fresh from a controversy over the firing of a superintendent, sought an "outsider." This young, dynamic person proceeded to implement a series of innovative steps, including the Kensington "dream," at a time when the national agenda included eliminating hunger and poverty from the nation and the world. The community, finding itself in increasingly difficult financial straights, first balked on the passage of tax levies set to fund the new superintendent's ambitious plans and later rejected levies needed to continue routine operations of the schools.

The district economic retrenchment was co-terminous with increasing rates of inflation and unemployment nationally and with spiraling federal taxes to fund expanding aid programs. It followed a decline of public support for federal initiatives due to suspicions spawned by an unpopular war, political scandals and alarm over the government's perceived penetration into areas once deemed local prerogatives. These aspects of the national mood, forerunners of an apparent return to localism and conservatism, coincided with the administration of Dr. George, Milford's current Superintendent of Schools. Representative of a long line of conservative educators in the Milford system, Dr. George, today, must contend with dwindling financial reserves, school integration, a restless teaching staff, school closings, and shifting populations of students. These issues are detailed in Volume II, Milford's Recent History.

Thus, we see Kensington's district as representative of the much more general context of contemporary public education which Lieberman (1977) aptly describes:

> Rather than the innovative curricular thrusts of the sixties and a seeking for alternative means of educating the young, school people are now being asked to go "back to basics," "trim the fat," and get rid of the "frills." Such terms as efficiency and accountability are rampant. Cost effectiveness is a key concept as schools are closing and the public is demanding that schools be held accountable for what boards will support. Few people will disagree that again the schools are playing out the chaos and confusion in the society. There are higher prices, fewer jobs, general dissatisfaction with futures, and the school represents the one place where the public still has a chance to voice its frustration with the many things gone wrong. (p. 259)

Through all this, Kensington must steer a course. The next chapter examines the men who have guided Kensington along its way through the years.

CHAPTER 3

THE VIEW FROM THE PRINCIPAL'S OFFICE

Thus far we have taken a brief look at the Kensington school 15 years after our initial report and found the building, the program, the staff and the students very different from what we had left more than a decade before. Then we backed away to gain a broad perspective of the school's context, which we described as turbulent and likely to remain that way. In this chapter, we return to Kensington and examine the school from the perspective of its principal. In the process we learn something of the man who must lead this school and the difficult nature of the principalship.

A Succession of Leaders

The morning of the birthday party the bakery sheet cake was carried in by two teachers. A large blue-green whale was sculpted in icing and appeared to be leaping from one sticky whitecap of frosting to the next, as Dr. Wales later said, "Almost like a super-whale, leaping into the air!" Dr. Wales, himself, arrived early this day. He was very excited and gained animation when he saw his whale cake. He resisted cutting his cake until all the faculty had arrived and a picture could be taken. First a camera was needed. Then as flash cube after flash cube failed, the staff scurried around until bright flood lights were found as a substitute. Wales endured the long delay in good spirit, wearing his red paper birthday-boy crown, holding up his cake, and grinning broadly. A gift was presented. It was a picture of Charlene Tuna, Charlie Tuna's supposed spouse. The fish was pictured wearing a long blonde wig and "coming on" as a real sex siren. An inscription read, "To my favorite principal, Dr. Wales. I love you."

The man in the red paper crown was the new principal of the Kensington school, Dr. Jonas Wales, beginning the second day of classes of his first year at the school. The party reflected the genuine love affair that was blooming at this early point between the faculty and their new leader. The staff was pleased, after a long interim of weak leadership, to begin a school year with a man who promised to restore order to the building and to support his staff. The extent of their pleasure and hope is best understood in light of a brief review of the succession of principals at Kensington.

The Shelby Era

The first man at Kensington's helm was Eugene Shelby. He came to Milford as principal of the new school but remained for just under two years, leaving midway through the spring semester. This fact is indicative of the growing problems he faced as leader of the Kensington innovation. In part, some of his problems while at the school are accounted for by the fact that he was viewed as a "deviant newcomer" to the district by other Milford principals and, like Superintendent Spanman, was never able to obtain the support a peer reference group can provide.

Within his own building, conflict with his staff developed during the first year over Shelby's professed preference for a "bottom to top" or democratic leadership style and the increasingly directive stance he developed. In our earlier study we characterized him as "intensely analytical" and "passionate in the pursuit of rationality." His ego was involved in his work to the extent that his own ideas were seen as "more vital and more real and more ideal than anything else that might be arrived at." Other views of Shelby included his uncanny ability to "sell" his program and building. A staff member reflected that Shelby virtually "brainwashed parents" with the positive aspects of the program. The larger Milford district, however, remained unconvinced. The image we are left with is of a man filled with a true belief in the new elementary education, who came to Milford an outsider and left relatively unchanged. In his own words, he "continued to pursue the holy grail" in education elsewhere.

Shelby's intellect, vision, and personality dominated the first two years of the school, as was recounted in detail in our original account. Yet, the overwhelming reaction 15 years later was contained in the joking one liner, "Eugene who?" The very absence of comment about him was a telling comment. The man whose name arose continually and unsolicited was Michael Edwards. The history of Kensington's leadership had become a history of Michael Edwards.

Edwards's Revisionary Decade

Michael Edwards was born and raised in Milford's neighboring Metropolitan City. He took his first teaching job with Milford in 1949 at an elementary school. In 1956, at age 31, Edwards was promoted to principal at Field School where he served just under 10 years. Those who worked with him described the last couple of years at Field as a time when staleness and boredom began to set in. Shelby's untimely resignation from Kensington provided a respite. From a field of six applicants, Edwards emerged the new Kensington principal.

We are told that Edwards joyfully accepted the new position but immediately faced problems. During the last few months of the school year, the Kensington teaching staff had rallied around the memory of their departed leader, refusing to impart any allegiance to the new man. At the end of the school year, Edwards received 17 resignations from the Kensington staff. Much of that summer was spent interviewing applicants for those positions and, when school again began in the fall, a revitalized staff greeted the students. Edwards had chosen both beginning and veteran teachers, but most came from within the Milford district. In 1980, 14 years later, we found that one fourth of the teachers working at Kensington had begun with Edwards in 1966. In all, one half of the faculty were hired by Kensington's second principal.

When the 600 students entered Kensington at the beginning of the school's third year, they found that the new principal had made some changes. One of the staff members recalled that first encounter and talked of the changes.

> The kids were not allowed to make as many choices. [In Shelby's era] they were allowed to make choices all day long, and choices in important things such as "Do I want to go to math class today, or do I want to go out and play."
>
> And I can remember talking to [Edwards] about it, and he said, "Oh no, the kids will have class.". . . We said to the kids, "This is the way we're going to do it now, we're all new and this is what we've decided to do." The amazing part of this [is] the kids never said--or very seldom said, "But last year we . . . ." I always found that very amazing.
>
> And another thing I remember is when I passed out textbooks the kids were terribly excited, "This is my book?" . . . "I get to keep it all year?" They really liked that textbook that they could keep in their desk. (TI, 1980)

The curricular modifications appeared to have been carried out swiftly and smoothly. Those modifications endured throughout Edwards's first six years.

District curriculum guidelines were adhered to more closely, teachers used more direct lectures, and students' learning activities were more scheduled and less independent.

With these changes came a modification of the original "perception core" to a more familiar "resource center" and the "covered play shelter" was sealed with brick to become the lunchroom and gymnasium. The first interior wall was built in the school's basic skills area. It ended the total openness of Kensington's original design. And the school's interior aquarium was drained because carpet lint continually clogged the system's pump and filters. Overall, however, the school retained its open feel, and visitors interested in its innovative design continued in a steady stream. Edwards spent much less time and effort with these guests than had his predecessor.

Over and above the instructional and physical changes at Kensington, there were major differences in the personalities and leadership styles of Shelby and Edwards. Both were "child-centered" principals, but Edwards was able to integrate that philosophy successfully with the school's program, putting him more in synchrony with the community. He was able to defuse much of the community's earlier disapproval. A parent club member told us:

> Mr. Edwards was--how do I put it--just a very special person. Everyone respected him over there, and there were no personality conflicts or anything of the sort. He worked hard with the children, and the children respected Mr. Edwards. He had a way of talking to kids, and he could just say what he had to without using physical punishment or anything of the sort. We worked with him quite closely with the Mother's Club. (TI, 1980)

Not by edict, but rather by example, Edwards's love of children became a model for his teachers. As one teacher reminisced, "I think all in all that his philosophy rubbed off on a majority of the teachers.

. . . that you can love a child and teach him. They don't have to be punished." Edwards' non-punitive approach to discipline, the strength of his personal rapport, and a cooperative, lower-middle-class group of students made for few problems. Students who were referred to the principal for misbehavior found a soft-spoken man who had spanked only two children in 10 years.

The divisiveness and conflict that marked Shelby's era were gone. Edwards allowed the teachers considerable autonomy in instructional matters. The frequent faculty meetings and the night and weekend planning sessions all but disappeared. In contrast to Shelby, who maintained an administrative aloofness from his staff, Edwards placed little social distance between himself and his teachers. Parties, banquets, celebrations, and general good humor were part of his formula for a cohesive and hard-working teacher-principal team.

Despite Edwards's propensity for more structure in Kensington's program, he was an innovator in his own right. Though not in the "alternative of grandeur" style of Shelby, Edwards encouraged his staff to try new ideas and to experiment with curriculum. He not only was supportive of teachers' ideas but also took the initiative in bringing opportunities for change and renewal into the building. One teacher reported, "He was always searching for new things and better ways to do things." He brought guest speakers into the school, arranged for workshops for his staff, and provided opportunities for his teachers to visit other innovative schools and programs.

The situations and attitudes described above represented the "golden years" of the Kensington School. Unfortunately, that golden era came slowly to an end over the last four years of Edwards's tenure. Edwards's failing health, combined with Milford's drastically changing racial composition, brought new problems to Kensington. These two factors, at least in the eyes of Kensington's teachers, contributed greatly to changes that occurred both during Edwards's last years and during the terms of succeeding principals.

The proportion of White to Black students attending Kensington School dramatically reversed. At one point there were 24 White students for every 1 Black student. Only four years later the ratio was 1 White student to 2 Black students. One teacher remembering this transition described the mutual adaptation required of the new students and the all-White faculty:

> Just the noise. Alright, six years ago, never would you have found this. If she [a team teacher] and I were sitting in the classroom where we were visible, where we could be seen, our kids would not say a word. The worst thing I ever had happen in all the years that I taught before that year when things started changing was one of my boys--a very bright boy--got mad at another one, and put his books in the sink and ran water over them. That was the worst thing. . . . I never picked up a paddle until four years ago. That was not my way and I've taught kindergarten, first grade, you know, all the way through.
>
> The different language. Alright, the kids used to talk about--I remember the first time we heard someone was "mellin'" with somebody. "Mellin'," I thought, "Oh dear, how do I face this one?" I come to find out it was "messing with," you know, "bothering," you know, "upsetting." Maybe I build this up too much, okay, but I was confused. I didn't understand. I wanted somebody to help me. I wanted to know how I could keep teaching fifth grade reading when my kids were at a first grade reading level. What do I do?
>
> And then the fights. We were not used to that at all. And you'd be sitting in the classroom teaching when all of a sudden two of them would jump up and start going at it. One time I got between two of them and I really got hit and it was the last time. I backed off and I said I would never do that again. . . . It would be interesting to look up some of the IQ scores. It used to be nothing for us to have an average IQ of 110 and now we're lucky if our average IQ in a classroom is 95 or 100. I don't like to go by

> IQ's, don't get me wrong, but it just used to fascinate me that there were so many bright kids. . . . The other thing was not listening. I could talk 'til I was blue and they would talk to each other or they would just simply --they cannot look you in the eye at all. And this looking around would upset me so much because I, you know. Do I grab their faces and turn them around? Do I forget it and not care whether they look at me? How do I handle that? . . . I could not accept the fact that every other word that came out of their mouth was, you know, dirty. And I couldn't accept the fact that they were so verbal and talked all the time. Not that I couldn't accept it, just that I was having a very hard time handling it. . . . I'm speaking more of the inner city rather than just Black. (TI, 1980)

Whether this teacher's perceptions of the shift in students at Kensington were accurate, were marred by frustration and apprehension, or were simply enhanced by the passage of years is not really the point here. The fact is that such perceptions by the teachers had consequences on the school's instructional program as well as the physical plant. Another teacher commented:

> In those first years I don't ever remember having a child who read below fifth grade level, and having them at fifth grade level was rare. So now, all of a sudden, you had this whole bunch that--you had to revamp your thinking, you know, you couldn't teach them as a whole group. You had to revamp completely. (TI,1980)

Another teacher joining the conversation said:

> Yeah, that's sort of when the "divisions" and that all fell by the wayside, I think. (TI, 1980)

"Divisions" referred to the continuous progress grouping arrangements that substituted for more traditional grade levels in the original Kensington design. The first teacher added:

> And more and more teachers requested walls. That was the first thing they thought--I say they thought, "If I have two walls, one on each side, it will be better." (TI, 1980)

Thus, the radical shifts in pedagogy and plant that we found on our return to Kensington began with the fears of the staff who suddenly faced a large number of students they didn't understand. Their urgent need to find mechanisms they could use to cope with the new student group drove them back to what was most familiar and what seemed to offer hope for the most control: self-contained classrooms, rigid curriculum, and tight--even coercive--discipline.

During this time of teacher adjustment and changing conditions, Edwards's health declined. Despite his illness, he insisted that he would see the school through its trying times. He still believed in his philosophy and program but as a supportive principal he made concession after concession to his clamoring staff. The walls continued to go up. Grade levels reappeared. Transition rooms were created so that needy students could receive extra assistance without being stigmatized by failure or by being held back.

One teacher recalled the way in which Edwards's faithful staff closed ranks about their ailing leader.

> We watched him die is what we really did. We watched the man that used to run up the steps and run down the steps barely able to get up, and have a very difficult time getting down. But never did he lose his finesse, his class, his ability to make a decision, or uphold someone, or to tell them they were wrong. . . . And even when he was in the hospital . . . his only desire was to get back to this school, because this was his school, this was his responsibility . . . and all this time we had problems--we had classroom problems, fights, knives, you know, we had problems. So we learned, in essence, to fend for ourselves, to go to different people to get the assistance we needed. I spent hours on the phone at night getting parental assistance. . . . We just protected--I don't think central office ever realized for years how sick the man was. (TI, 1980)

Edwards, then, held fast to his child-centered beliefs, hoping they would bear for Kensington's new students the same fruits as they had for students of earlier years. Shortly after his death, in appreciation of his dedication, the community and district renamed the school the Michael Edwards Elementary School.[1]

Marking Time: The Hawkins Years

Kensington's next principal was William Hawkins. He was preceded briefly by one of Kensington's teachers, a woman, who many of the staff felt should have been appointed to the principalship. As Hawkins, however, commented later:

> There are no woman principals in Milford, as I'm sure you're aware. There was one a long time ago . . . and she was relieved of her position. . . . There's not been a woman principal in this district since that time. (TI, 1980)

Hawkins grew up in a small rural community. He taught and served as a principal before coming to Milford in the late 1950's. He recalled the urgency around his appointment as Kensington principal.

> One day Dr. George walked in and said, "I've come after you to go to Kensington School as Mr. Edwards' assistant. He's ill and I want you to go over there this morning." Mr. Edwards had gone to the hospital that morning and he died four days later. I never did even get to see him. So I took over cold here.
>
> I come in cold with the idea of trying to improve the discipline as they were having a great deal of calls from parents at the central office. They were having a lot of discipline problems with children fighting and things like this. So the first morning I come into the school, out in front on the circle out here and up on the hill, there must have been 150 kids playing right out in the streets where the cars were coming in. So I decided something had to be done quick. I called the director of elementary education to come over and he come over that morning and we walked around the building and broke up three fights the first time around.

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[1] For purposes of clarity we will continue to call the school Kensington.

> I suspended three children, I think, that first week. And things began to cool a little bit. Every time I would call a parent, practically, their theory was "You've got to use a paddle up there at that school," and I hadn't been used to doing that. So I tried to break up the situation and I began discipline and to control without it. But after a while, I finally decided that that was the way you had to do it, and I--so the discipline problem was the thing that really bothered me when I come into this school. We don't have that much discipline problem--we do have some yet, we always will have, I think. But anyhow, that was what I saw the day that I come over here. (TI, 1979)

Hawkins's administration of the Kensington School was complicated by the transience of the school's newer families and the high turnover rate of the pupils. This problem reached a peak during the 1978-79 school year when 49 students enrolled in the school and 102 left, a fluctuation of fully one third of that year's student body. Furthermore, the enrollment for the first time of Vietnamese children added the problem of non-English-speaking students to Kensington's burden.

In his candid manner, Hawkins spoke of a further complication that he felt was related to the changing student population.

> We have already, I believe within this year, referred I would say 25 kids to Special District. And all the children that we refer just about after they've tested them, come up with learning disabilities. There are more learning disabilities than you can imagine in a school of this size.
>
> We have to take them, we have to accept them if they live in the district, and we have to let them go if they decide to leave the district. So I don't know, the only thing that I could see, and I have suggested this many times, is to lower the ratio [of students to teachers].

Asked why this strategy had not been employed, Hawkins replied:

> Money. The same thing with making other changes. Most changes cost money. This district is a very poor district, operating on the same tax level they operated on in 1969. Here it is 1979. (TI, 1979)

New state and federal regulations further affected Kensington. The state mandated that a standardized test of basic skills be given in all districts yearly. Hawkins feared this would limit Kensington's instructional prerogatives. In addition, state laws governing corporal punishment were changed, confusing the students and the community. And finally, an order from the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission forced the hiring of Kensington's first Black teacher. Hawkins commented:

> The EEOC caused us to start hiring Black teachers, I guess. I started asking for Black teachers when I first came over here, but it didn't take the EEOC long until someone had reported us and now we have to hire one Black teacher for each two White we hire. (TI, 1979)

Although Hawkins' approved of the new hiring practice, he did not believe that practice alone necessarily solved any problems. His first Black teacher expressed the same helpless dismay with the students as did most of the other teachers. Hawkins described his attempt to utilize the new teacher as a consultant in dealing with difficult children.

> So I called her and asked her about this problem, and she said, "Well, how could I answer your question, because I was not raised like [these students] were." (TI, 1979)

Despite Hawkins's frustration with and concern for the school and its students, he did not believe he could turn the school around. He was near the end of his career in education when we returned to Kensington and like Edwards, his predecessor, Hawkins suffered from debilitating health problems. His perception of his capacity was influenced by that fact.

> Two years ago next week, I had a heart attack and have been ill with this ever since--missed probably 40 days this year--with being ill. So I have not been able to really put too much pressure on in changing the situation around here and knowing that I would only be here for two years. . . . It takes vim and vigor to really make changes. You've got to

> really be able to prove to them that you believe in what you are doing. (TI, 1979)

Thus the Hawkins years can best be described as marking time. This third principal was a gentle, friendly man, beset with health problems at the end of his career. His roots were small town, rural, Southern. He followed a principal who had stamped the school indelibly. Kensington and its immediate neighborhood continued to change at a rapid pace during his brief tenure.

The Current Head: Jonas Wales

We return now to Dr. Wales, the new and current principal of the Kensington School, the man on whom the present faculty bases its hopes for a smoother running ship. He is a physically large man. He deserves every gaping inch of the open-mouthed expression of the young child described in Chapter 1. He is married, a very proud father of three girls, and an active leader in his church. He grew up in the South, where he developed both his drawl and his interest in education. He graduated from a state university in 1955 with a liberal arts degree, majoring in both mathematics and Spanish. Following graduation, Wales obtained his first teaching position in a small rural school where he taught seventh and eighth grade mathematics. He then moved to that district's high school to teach algebra and trigonometry. During this period he continued taking courses at the university and earned a master's degree in secondary education. He returned to the elementary school as principal in 1961 and remained in that position for four years.

Wales followed a colleague to the midwest in 1965 and was hired to teach math in a junior high school of the Milford School District. After one year, he dropped out of teaching to consider other possible careers but returned to the classroom after only six months of soul-searching. No position was open in Milford at that time but he was able to assume a junior high school math position in a neighboring district and taught there for six years. He returned to Milford after that, renewing old friendships and starting new ones. Undoubtedly the most important liaison formed during this early period of Wales's career was with the social studies teacher across the hall, Ronald George, future superintendent of the Milford district. In the next several years, Wales accepted an interim, one-year principalship at a Milford elementary school, returned to the junior high school for two more years of teaching math and, finally, arrived at Kensington to steer that floundering ship back on course. This most recent period of his career and Kensington's history is best described by Wales himself.

A Conversation with the Principal. The relative quiet of Wales's office most often provided the setting for extended conversations. As we mentioned in Chapter 1, no such space had been set aside in Kensington's original design. There had been instead an amorphous and flexible space called the "administrative suite" that had served as building headquarters. During our talks, Wales sat behind his mahogany desk, itself a veteran of years of service in public schools, its top cluttered with papers, textbooks, and knickknacks. Two wooden chairs cramped the remaining space. The door stood open, leaving the main entry to the school and the secretary's desk in view. Between interruptions, and prompted by our questions, Wales reflected on Kensington, his position, expectations, and experiences.

In discussing the advantages of being a principal rather than a teacher, Wales spoke of his restlessness as a teacher and suggested at least one motivation for moving up the organizational ladder.

> Well, in the classroom you have two basic problems. One is to teach the subject matter, and the other, discipline-wise, is keeping your classroom under control. . . . Here [as a principal] I have much more [to do]. . . . There [in the classroom] I'm confined to this box all day, one room. In between classes I could stand in the hall but then I'm always right back in there. Here, [in the principalship] I have much more freedom to move around, just individual freedom to move around. . . . I have a variety of problems to deal with rather than just curriculum. It gives you a wider range of things to do which I like. I get to deal with more adults this way rather than always just having 25 youngsters in there. . . . Sometimes [the principalship] gives you some harder decisions but that's what they pay you extra for. (TI, 12/79)

Wales described the year he spent as an interim principal in the Milford district simply. "I got the job done in the way [the district administration] wanted it done," he said. He assumed that that experience had helped him in his bid for the Kensington position. He related the manner in which he had obtained the interim principalship.

> I know the central office staff and they knew I wanted to be a principal and so they asked me to take the principal's job for one year. I had been supportive of the administration so that some of the people who wanted the job had not been quite so supportive. . . . That means that I don't go around knocking the superintendent and writing his name with funny cartoons. Basically, my philosophy is much the same as the central office staff where some of the others do not have the same philosophy. (TI, 12/79)

Wales emerges here as a man with a rural background who had the initiative to work at outside jobs as an undergraduate and then to proceed almost immediately to post graduate work while beginning classroom teaching. Experience as an elementary principal, serendipity, an ol' boy's network, and towing the administration's line brought Wales to the Kensington principalship. His motivation, at least in part, stemmed from his personal need to escape the isolation from adults that characterizes the traditional classroom.

Wales talked further of his assumption of command and of his view of Kensington's primary problem.

> They offered the school to me and I talked to some of the people and after that I recognized that discipline was not as strict, as tight, as regulated, whatever . . . that I would like it to be. So that was one of the first things I wanted to get established was that we were going to have discipline and the kids were not going to be horsing around in the classrooms. Teachers were to teach and discipline would be my responsibility henceforth. So I have taken quite a bit of time with the discipline issue for that reason because teachers should be teaching and they can't do that if they're having a problem in the classroom. . . . Basically I wanted [the school] to get settled down, to get into a certain mode that I wanted it in. (TI, 5/80)

When asked to describe that mode, Wales spoke of his traditional educational philosophy and the way he perceived his role.

> Well, the mode that I would like to have is a philosophy I have about teachers. Teachers are to teach and my job as principal is to coordinate that and to alleviate any problem that interferes with that and to support them in any way with materials, with myself, or whatever it takes to support them in their teaching job. They're supposed to be teaching and I'm supposed to be a helping person who makes teaching easier and more effective, whatever the word is, more effective or whatever it takes for them to get the job done that they're supposed to do. I view myself not as a boss, exactly, but as a person who's here to help and that's what I try to do as far as discipline and getting [teachers] supplies, whatever things like that that will help them, I try to do. (TI, 5/80)

Wales made it clear, moreover, that he saw the school system as a hierarchy in which he and others had very specific roles.

> I've always been in the mind that a superintendent sets the tone for a district and the principal sets the tone for a school and the teacher sets the tone in the way he's going to run the classroom.
>
> Let's start with the youngsters. It makes no difference to me whether they're Black or White, they're students and we educate them. . . . We have a very good staff, a very dedicated staff. We work hard at the business of teaching

> and we have what I think is a reasonably good curriculum. . . . We could do a few more things if there were more money available, however, you have to work with whatever parameters that you have. . . . One of nature's rules that I think any principal has is for his school to run smoothly and pray that the kids learn and that's the primary thing, to work toward this end. (TI, 12/79)

Wales's straightforward views of schooling, that students were in school to learn, that "teachers are to teach," and that principals set building tone, was consistent with the views of the front office leadership. These views also translated into several direct strategies for running his school.

First, he was very aware of the importance of his faculty. He simply said, "I cannot do their job." Keeping his crew working smoothly, then, was one goal to which he devoted much energy. He revealed several means to that end.

In the area of hiring, Wales relied on instinct, making sure that prospective staff members would fit into both his world view and the social system already in place at Kensington. His comments regarding the hiring of a new music teacher, and the way in which he narrowed the field of candidates, revealed his approach.

> I don't know exactly what I should say. Just two out of the five seemed to me the type of people that I wanted. . . . They were all young. . . . so age was not the deciding factor. One person came here and sat there and talked to me with a low cut dress, high cut skirt. This does not impress me. I'm impressed with young ladies who are good looking and that, but for a job I don't need that. I don't go just for the visuals. I'm interested in music--not the person just for the person. Another was pushy. They just started telling me how good they were and how well they liked kids and how big a job they could do if even given an opportunity and I thought they oversold themselves. (TI, 12/79)

Thus through this process of elimination, the field narrowed. There seemed to be no question in Wales's mind when one candidate struck a particularly responsive note.

> Now the lady we hired came in and said, "You know I've been out of teaching since I had children because I wanted to get my children in school before I went back to work. I hope that doesn't hurt me." And I said, "That's what my philosophy is and that's what my wife did, so that's a plus rather than a negative." So everything that she said like that hit within the kinds of things that I want to do with kids. . . . She was very pleasant and kind of struck me as having the kind of philosophy of music that I want. (TI, 12/79)

Once again the importance of "fitting in" philosophically with the district proves an important point in understanding Kensington and the Milford District. Wales reiterated that point and described how the existing teaching staff must be considered in any decision to hire a new faculty member.

> You got to kind of get a feel for the person. . . . What I do is try to hire a person who fits my concept of Music or P.E. or 7th grade or 5th grade or whatever and also who will fit into the building with as little turmoil as possible. Turmoil is not the word but the disruption, just little things, that fit in with people. In my opinion it is necessary for a faculty to be, to get along basically in order to have a good teaching situation in the building. If you have a lot of bickering and fighting, I think it hurts your educational program so I always try to pick someone who will fit into the building. (TI, 12/79)

This concern for the integration of a new teacher into the faculty system leads to Wales' second strategy for keeping his staff working happily, maintaining esprit de corps. This, too, required his attention and energy.

> It doesn't take care of itself. What I try to do, well, it's hard to explain. I try to keep a give and take with each one of the teachers individually, myself, and always try to be on good terms with them. I hate, I don't like the term especially to make them like me, but I want them to feel that they can come and talk to me at any time. . . . [I don't want them] to feel, like, well, this is not that important, he [the principal] is not interested in me. It is better to have this easy comradery that lets the teachers and me know exactly where I stand as far as

> discipline and those kind of things and yet try to be a friendly principal rather than a boss principal and so that any time they want to discuss anything they can and they come and tell me that they're having this difficulty. Then I try to talk to them and see what I can do to solve any difficulties. Most of [the faculty] has been here quite a while and get along very well. However, there are some hot spots here and there for which I try to find some happy [middle] ground that everybody will be at least mediumly pleased with. (TI, 12/79)

Wales's sense of humor stood him in good stead in this regard. Events like the birthday party described at the opening of this chapter displayed the mesh between his wit and the faculty's love for practical jokes. After that party, one teacher had commented on how nice it was to have a principal with a sense of humor again and compared the birthday party with the happier days of Edwards's years at the school.

Wales, however, displayed limits. His leadership was not entirely orchestrated by his teacher's needs, views and habits. Another post-party comment revealed this aspect of his character. One teacher reflected that he had thought the party was in part, at least, "brown nosing" the new principal. His cynicism was explained by his "losing" in an exchange of wit with Wales the day before. Summary observations relate that episode:

> Wales had been in the teacher's room and had said, "Where's your kids?" The teacher said something back like, "Gee, I thought a good principal would know where his classes were." In front of Wales, the teacher told the story and said that he was now one up on the principal and in a teasing tone continued, "I'm glad we're still friends after I zinged you yesterday." Dr. Wales retorted, "Oh, you are one up right now, but I'll catch up. If you've seen the alligator on my desk which has the little sign on it, 'I don't hold a grudge, I just get even.'" (SO, 8/79)

The importance of give and take between principal and teacher was recognized by Wales, but in the end he was willing to bear-up under criticism if his decisions went against the grain of the staff in matters that he considered important. This point was clearly made in our interview with him.

> When I came here, we had two first grades, two second grades and a first and second grade split. Well, I don't like first grade/second grade splits because I like my first grades to be smaller, and so after three or four weeks, I talked to them [the teachers involved]. They said they weren't opposed [to a change] but they weren't for it, either. So finally, I just made the decision to do away with the . . . split and made three small first grade classes and two larger second grades. A few people have had to work a little harder and I will try next year to even it out a little bit. If, on occasion, it is necessary for you to do these things to continue the program that you're interested in . . . you just have to take whatever flack that is involved. . . . I can stand it. (TI, 12/79)

Thus, Wales was aware of the potential criticism he would receive from the faculty if he violated their wishes. He was willing to do this occasionally for the good of his program, but he maintained the view of the importance of "evening it out a little bit" sometime in the future. He appeared in many ways to apply an intuitive cost-benefit analysis or pragmatic problem solving approach to issues at the school. An example of this follows. His style is apparent in a discussion of his unhappiness with a traditional and school-wide Halloween party, part of the student and teacher culture of the school.

> You see, I'm, maybe these things serve a purpose that I don't recognize, but basically, I'm opposed to very many of these kinds of things that go on during the school day. You think about the number of hours, pupil hours that are devoted to these things. Now, maybe that can be made into [an instructional experience] I understand, but most of these things I've been involved in have just been fun and games. And fun and games are all right as long as they add to the instructional program, but if they don't, then I'm opposed to its going on during instructional time. If I had a way to do so, I'd do away with that. But I don't know that you could do that without

> causing more upheaval than it would be worth in the long run. I think it might cost me more instructional time and incompatibility with the teachers . . .than it would help me. (TI, 12/79)

Despite this disagreement with his faculty over the event, the party went on. In this instance there was simply not enough to be gained from terminating the custom.

There was a third obvious strategy which Wales employed for maintaining his teacher group. He consistently applied a simple rule in the difficult situations of teacher-student or parent-teacher conflict. An example follows:

> If the teacher has come into competition with a student--in my personal opinion, the teacher is never wrong as long as we're in that situation. We had a student transferred to us from one of the other elementary schools today . . . he's transferred because he's already been suspended twice over there and according to the report that I got, it's the school's fault that he's having these troubles. So the superintendent transferred him here. So, I just told the student's mother this morning that she didn't have to transfer him thinking it's going to be an easier school, the principal wasn't easier and I knew the teacher wouldn't be easier because I gave her the letter. I said, "You got a traditional teacher and you've got a traditional principal and it isn't going to be easier and he's going to have to toe the line and do his work." I tried to make sure that she understood . . . that he did not come to a place where he's going to get away with just whatever he wants. So, she's well warned. (TI, 12/79)

In this transaction, Wales did set out clear expectations for the incoming family, but it was also clear from his comments that it was difficult for him to conceive that the prior teacher or school could have been at fault for the child's difficulties.

There were other ways in which Wales promoted his alliance with the faculty. One was what he saw as a very unusual activity for a principal --lunch room supervision:

> Now, I don't know that any other principal in the district does this. . . . It's the other thing that I do to make the building run smoother. My presence in the lunch room makes it run smoother and it takes any responsibility from the teacher of having to check all the time. They can just walk off and forget about it and eat their lunch because they need some time to relax in there when they eat. (TI, 12/79)

Wales's "presence" was very visible during the lunch periods as he paced among the tables, frequently with a paddle protruding conspicuously from his back pocket. His posture left no doubt that order was the rule. And order generally did prevail during the three, hectic lunch shifts in which batches of 150 or so restless elementary school students were fed in 30-minute periods.

Wales' preoccupation with discipline perhaps was best explained under the same rubric of promoting harmony within his school and among his faculty. It was the other significant aspect of "keeping the system running." Spanking students was not uncommon. Suspending offenders, although distasteful to Wales in several ways, became more routine than he liked. Detention, holding students after regular school hours, was instituted over the objection of at least one outspoken teacher. We noted at the time that the objection was ignored by Wales, in an apparent violation of his tendency to move with his teachers. It was noted, however, that this particular teacher was a social isolate in the faculty system. Wales's meting out of punishments did support his teachers, but as the following comments disclose, he was not insensitive to the students or their parents.

> I suspended a kid once and that's a decision that I don't like. That's tough in the sense that we can't teach him unless he's here. And that's a tough decision to put him out for a number of days and he misses those days of instruction. . . . We had a fire drill. And going out

> on the fire drill, he was pushing and shoving and after a teacher said, "Stand in line and don't push and shove," he gave her this smirk and she says, you know, she talks to him about talking back to her and he quieted down. She turned to walk away and another teacher standing within 20 feet [sees him] shake his fist at her and as soon as I found that out, I suspended him for three days. What we do is send a letter home with him that he is suspended and we send one home in the United States Mail. The mother didn't know he was suspended until the letter came in the mail and then she asked me [on the phone] what's his problem and I told her what he had done. I told her I was not tolerating this kind of behavior from him and she said that's fine. I had put in the letter that she had to come back with him. She said, "I've got a new job and it's almost impossible for me to get off." She said, "I agree with you 100 per cent." Well, you write me a letter to that effect, that you agree 100 percent and that he shouldn't act like this and send it back with him at the end of the three days. And so I put the letter from her in his personal file and he's been a good student since. (TI, 12/79)

One further example also exemplifies Wales's humanity.

> We had a youngster yesterday who got suspended for not coming to detention and he came walking in here at 3:35 and sat down there and he was so upset he couldn't talk. He said his mother was going to beat him and send him back to his father in Mississippi. So I gave him another chance. So I'm wishy-washy. Well, you can call it anything you like. I did it and whatever flack comes out of it, I have to suffer, but I don't want to see him back in Mississippi with his Daddy because he doesn't want to go and I don't want to see him beat. (TI, 12/79)

Despite Wales' distaste for suspension, he used it frequently to maintain order at Kensington. At the end of his first year he recalled at least seventeen suspensions which had been carried out. He reflected that many had involved the same students. Some students had been sent home three or four times during the year. Yet, the community supported his tough stand, even parents of the offenders.

> You know, they don't want them suspended but if I have a legitimate reason, they give me some flack but not bad. Now, I sent one other student, I did not suspend him, but I sent a letter that he should bring his parents back the

> next day to get him back into school. . . . They both came. And the father talked to him very quietly and told him that he was not to do what he had been doing, that he was here to learn and whether he liked us as teacher and principal was immaterial. He was to get his learning from this. (TI, 12/79)

Wales was somewhat surprised by the willingness of parents to accept his tough position on discipline, but happy to have them as allies.

Like the quiet spoken father in the episode above, Wales believed that children were in school to learn. He linked this belief to his premise that "teachers were to teach." He saw both of these tenets of his self-termed "traditionalism" hinging on tight discipline within the school and a faculty with high morale. All of this fit well within the bounds of the Superintendent's, the Board's and the community's expectations.

There were, of course, some problems. Many of them were generated in the turbulent environment already described, and some were viewed by Wales as beyond his control. In our interviews he described these problems as belonging to a different set than he thought he would encounter at the school.

> We've had a lot fewer problems than I anticipated, major problems. We have had a lot . . . of fights and things along the way. . . . We were expecting a lot of that but, still, it's not as much a problem as I thought it would be. From talking to people earlier, I had anticipated a different set of problems than I have encountered . . . the situation of racial balance, you know. (TI, 12/79)

First on his list was his discomfort with a county program, Special Education Services, which provided classes for children with diagnosable learning or behavior difficulties. Wales perceived the program to conflict with other routine classroom activities and yet, according to his perception of the law, he could not interfere with the program's agenda.

> One of the concerns I had this year was the Special Education Services Resource Room. I had a discussion with the Special Ed. person and I was given to understand that it was impossible for me to take anyone out of this program once they were in it. Maybe that's true. This person is employed by Special Education Services and I have to supervise that room and this upset me some because I think that the person in charge should be able to do what's the less detriment to the whole. (TI, 12/79)

He explained the specific problem as he saw it.

> The special education teacher has to offer the services to the children in her room to satisfy the law, whatever it is. This was a concern to me as I watched it go along. I watched the kids come out of their rooms and go to the Resource Room, to the Reading Room, you know, wherever they go so many times a day and I, being a traditionalist, I wonder if this is good because you have kids coming and going out of their room all day for this and that. And I have put a number of hours under my belt to study about making some sort of schedule. I have made an attempt at it but it seems like it is going to be an impossible task. . . . But that seems to be one of my concerns, that Special Education Services Room. (TI, 12/79)

Another problem stemmed from Wales's inexperience as an elementary teacher, and his lack of training and familiarity with elementary curriculum. That inexperience was worsened by seemingly overwhelming odds, particularly in the area of reading.

> Being a new principal, I'm still in the middle of the whirl of trying to get myself back to thinking about elementary curriculum and working with teachers and resource people which I do not do when I teach in the classrooms at junior high school.
>
> [One concern is reading.] My philosophy is to start with the youngest ones and work from there. Now, in this building we have 141 youngsters [one third of the school] who qualify for special reading help. The reading teacher is required by law to only take 50, so my philosophy has been to take them as young as we can, 1st, 2nd, 3rd grade, and work with them . . . because of age and the number of

> years in school and they are receptive to help at a younger age. . . . I also asked the reading teacher not to take any students that are involved in the Special Services Room in which the limit is 30. So it's possible of those 141 students to get some sort of remedial help from either our special reading teacher or the Special Services person for 80 of them. (TI, 12.79)

Despite his best intentions, 61 students who qualified for special reading help would not receive remedial training. This problem stemmed partially from the law which limited class size for both the Milford reading specialist and the Special Services person. Partially, it related to district inequalities. The following conversation illustrates the latter point:

> OBS: Can you make a pitch to central office for more reading help?
>
> Dr. W: Yes, I can make a pitch but I would not anticipate receiving another reading teacher.
>
> OBS: Are their other schools in the district with significantly fewer reading problems?
>
> Dr. W: Oh, yes. I'm sure that's true in some of the eastern schools. (These are schools which lie on the other side of what Milford teachers call the "Holy Highway." This major avenue serves as a distinct racial and economic boundary between Milford neighborhoods. DCD)
>
> OBS: Is there any equity argument about that? Can you make an argument that somebody will listen to?
>
> Dr. W: I've never known of anything to happen like that. (TI, 12/79)

It is interesting to note that in both these instances of problems that frustrated Wales, the actual authority to solve the issues lay beyond the principal's grasp. State and federal laws, and district-level decisions hampered problem-solving steps that Wales wished he could take.

The potency of the principal as school leader, then, is a relative commodity. The complexity of the formula from which that potency may be derived in today's schools is revealed in another portion of our interviews with Dr. Wales. In this excerpt, the principal discusses a change in policy regarding after school activities.

> Title IX, of course, affects us . . . there have been a couple of things at the elementary level in extracurricular activities. The district has required P.E. teachers to run an extracurricular program and they would pay them a certain amount of money for a certain number of hours put in for that. Right now, according to Title IX, I don't know that this is true really, but according to Title IX they had some problems in restricting certain activities because of the type of the program. They said you didn't have enough programs for all children to mix, boys and girls . . . because girls don't like this sort of thing, you don't have anything comparable for them to get into, you've got them doing this because you're afraid they'd get hurt or something else, but you didn't give them anything else--this kind of thing.
>
> Now, the district has gone to auction--a teacher can auction his ability for money. He can or cannot do it . . . the extracurricular part. (If the teacher takes money the activity must be offered for both boys and girls. DCD) Now he can, if he wishes, run any program he wants and not take any money for it. Our P.E. teacher opted not to take money and he's going to offer something in the spring. (TI, 12/79)

We asked Wales about his role in this kind of negotiation. He responded:

> If they [the teachers] have signed up with central office, they are paid. I'm in charge of overseeing the program. I wouldn't think the central office would approve anything once I had decided against it, and I wouldn't overrule central office if they had decided on something. I would be given directions to have the program run and work and they would not direct the program at all. It would be up to me.
>
> In my opinion, my authority extends to where I can completely do away with it or rearrange it to suit me. Now personally I would do away with a program only if I thought it was harmful to some child. . . . I might rearrange it if I thought a significant number of children were not allowed to participate simply because they were too small and it should be set to fit the child, the children in this building rather than to suit the P.E. teacher. (TI, 12/79)

Thus, the actual delivery of an afterschool program at Kensington results from negotiations between interested teachers and central office personnel. Those discussions are constrained by federal regulations that are designed to help guarantee children the right to participate in school experiences no matter what their race or gender. The principal's control over the development of afterschool programs appears limited by his or her informal influence in the district office. But once the program is approved at the district level, he assumes a great deal of control over the operation of the program. The building principal, then, works within numerous external constraints but exercises power at the building level. We asked Wales to generalize about the limits of his authority in his school.

> We have a general program and I have to administer that whether I like it or not. . . . Now, when you come to extra things or assigning staff or duties or things like that, I have quite a bit of authority to change it or rearrange it or to veto part of it. [With scheduling] I prefer for [the teachers] to arrange their own time, as long as it fits in the time span and satisfies the requirements that we're here for. Then, if there is no decision, I will step in and make the decision and it will have to be done. I prefer to do that in the general running of the school. If we have something that could be decided as a group of teachers, I prefer the teachers to decide. However, if it comes to a tie or they don't want to decide, if I can make the decision, I will and we go with that. . . . I would always prefer working together rather than just distributing orders. (TI, 12/79)

This response and other portions of the interview with Wales demonstrate several ways in which the authority of a school principal is limited. First, he recounted several instances where his wishes were constrained by state and federal mandates. Second, he alluded to an unwritten district code; once made, he would not disagree with the decisions of his superiors; in return, he expected autonomy at the building level. Third, he was subject to the written rules of the board of education. Wales preferred to involve his teachers in school decisions, adding a fourth factor to those that limited his decision making capacity. However, here, he specified that he reserved the right to make final decisions if teachers failed to act. Fifth, Wales's limited knowledge about school law and elementary curriculum hampered his ability to make decisions in the system. Sixth, scarce financial resources, in his opinion, prevented the kinds of programs he wanted to develop, again limiting the scope of his capacity to act in the system.

A Day in the Life of . . . We had the opportunity to observe Dr. Wales at his job over a period of two years. Most interactions with him or opportunities to see him in action occurred as he would enter other situations we were observing. On one occasion in February of his first year at Kensington, we arranged with Wales to "shadow" him for a full school day. For the most part, his behaviors that day paralleled the activities we had watched him perform throughout the year. In this sense, we observed the continuity of a typical school day from the vantage point of the school principal.

At the same time, however, it was apparent that Wales was very aware of our presence. For instance, he offered seating to the observer each time they changed settings, as a host would do for a respected guest. Also, his secretary remarked in a good natured way about how busy Wales had been the day of the observation and how he had found no need to leave the building or visit the central office. Lastly, the class visitations we report were definitely not routine events in his daily schedule, as demonstrated by one teacher's enthusiastic praise of his atypical presence. We begin, then, one day with the Kensington principal.

Dr. Wales arrived at Kensington at 8:05 a.m. Aware of the observer's presence, Wales chose to make no comment as he entered his office. At this point he appeared committed to treat the "shadow" as a shadow. Almost immediately the phone rang, a call from a parent concerned that her child had not yet received a magazine that the daughter had ordered and paid for in class. After yet another telephone conversation, Wales proceeded to the teachers' lounge, the early-morning gathering place for much of the staff. On this February morning, we noted fewer teachers in the lounge than usual. The conversation revolved around a third grade child who dealt with classroom frustrations by "giving the finger" to her perceived tormentors. Several instances of the child's habitual response were shared by various teachers. Laughter filled the room.

At 8:45 Wales left the teachers' lounge and walked to the gymnasium. Students were gathering there before the start of the school day. Usually they remained on the playground, but in this instance the below zero weather advised an indoor wait. Dr. Wales's secretary interrupted his progress to inform him that a parent had called about a discipline issue. This prompted Wales to remark humorously with an old school adage, "You know about my philosophy, teach the best and shoot the rest." He arrived at the gym and stood in the doorway above the students. He yelled at various youngsters who were running about the gymnasium floor. However, most of the control he demonstrated was achieved by his mere presence.

As he continued this supervision, two repairmen arrived to fix the building's emergency lighting system. He complained to them that it had been two years since the first work requisition had been submitted for this problem. He issued his complaint in a joking manner. At this point, a young student entered and was singled out to the observer. Within the previous two weeks, the boy's father and uncle had been murdered. Their "executions" were ostensibly drug related. No teacher assisted Wales with this supervision. He preferred to free teachers from extra duty when possible.

Dr. Wales signaled the beginning of school by loudly directing the children to proceed to their classrooms. As they filed past him, he touched many in different ways. Girls were patted on the head. Boys were greeted with playful sparring. A black youth extended his hand, palm up, to Wales. The customary "give-me-five" was exchanged and terminated with a "soul handshake." As the gymnasium emptied, the Pledge of Allegiance began blaring from a hallway loudspeaker. A Vietnamese youth stopped still in his tracks, placed his hand over his heart and solemnly recited the words, all alone, not loudly, but clearly.

The Vietnamese child evidently reminded Wales of an incident from the previous day which had angered him greatly. As we sat in his office at 9:00 AM, he recounted how it was necessary for him personally to drive several of the school's Vietnamese pupils to another elementary school for daily English lessons. The previous day he had delivered the children to the school at the appropriate time, but he had found no one present or prepared to work with his students.

He had confronted the principal of that school with the irresponsibility of the situation and a fracas had ensued. The other principal had apparently resorted to harsh words in reponse to Wales's accusations. Wales said the principal had used "God damn" in his retort. Then, in the presence of the observer, Wales called the central office to complain about the other principal's lack of decorum. As he made the call he maneuvered his ceramic alligator around his desk.

At 9:05 AM the first discipline case of the day intruded on Wales. Kensington's music teacher had sent a boy and a girl to speak to him, alledging that the boy had kicked the girl in the stomach. Dr. Wales asked the girl for her story first. He then asked the boy why he had kicked the girl. The boy claimed that the girl had provoked him first and offered an explanation about how his "kick" had been accidental. He told how the children had been filing out of the music room and had been on steps at the time of the incident. He said that the girl had been below and immediately behind him and that he had unintentionally caught her with his heel as he had proceeded up the stair.

Wales dismissed the girl after asking her if she wanted to see the nurse. The girl declined the offer and returned to her classroom. He then turned to the young boy but was interrupted by his secretary before his reprimand could begin. Permission was required to send another student home to fetch a forgotten lunch. Granting that permission, Wales again turned to the distraught youth and said, "You're no dummy. You've got a brain." He ended saying that he didn't want to see the same sort of thing occur again. The student was sent back to his class. No further action was taken. Wales spoke to the observer and said, "Bruce is a good kid. He's the one that gave me the handshake in the gym this morning."

By 9:30 Wales had dealt with another discipline problem. This time a single third grader had been sent to him carrying a crumpled piece of paper. The wad was a note the student had written and dropped on a classroom floor. The note had been found and read by the classroom teacher. Because the message had included such invectives as "asshole" and "pussy" the student had been sent to the office for discipline.

> Dr. Wales read the note and then spoke to the boy saying, "Why did you write this note?" The boy mumbled something and Wales said, "Speak up." The boy said, "I don't know." Wales said, "You don't know why you wrote this bad note? . . . You wrote this note and you'was dumb enough to let it get out of your possession?" (FN, 2/26/80)

The next hour of the day, 9:40 to 10:40 AM, Wales spent in a primary reading class. He spent the period quietly observing the teacher as she rotated among several reading groups that were separated according to the children's reading levels. At one point the school counselor entered and talked to one of the students. Wales quietly pointed out that the counselor had been a pawn in a recent game of rivalry between Kensington and one of the other elementary schools. With one round of that game at an end, the woman was spending more time at Kensington than at the rival school. At 10:40, the classroom teacher dismissed her final reading group with an enthusiastic "See you later, tootsies" and Dr. Wales left the classroom.

Back behind his desk, Wales signed a "progress report" for one student so that it could be mailed to the child's parents. He noted how it was nothing more than a re-named failing notice. Dr. Wales then spoke to a secretary at the central office about an insurance brochure that the district had circulated. Next he ordered a new step ladder for the school. At 10:50 the teacher whose reading class he had just observed entered and ecstatically praised Wales's visit to her classroom. According to her, the children had been very impressed by his visit, and she told how his presence motivated their activities that period. At 11:05 the teacher who had sent the child with the wadded-up note to Wales earlier in the morning dropped by to discuss the child's behavior. She was particulary alarmed by the child's low self-esteem. She told how the student had frequently written how he hated himself and how he felt so "dumb."

As the lunch hour neared, Wales walked to the teachers' lounge where he spent half an hour eating and talking informally with other staff who were free at that time. He shared some of his personal past with his faculty and they responded warmly to his stories.

Between 12:00 and 1:00 Wales supervised the student lunchroom. He began this duty by helping to pass out lunches to the children as they filed by. As he stooped over the bins from which the lunches were drawn, his suit coat would hike up in the back, giving the impression according to the observer of a "rooster tail." The cause was revealed later as Wales marched between tables and drew from his back pocket a wooden paddle branded with the words "Whale Power." His behavior was mostly teasing as he cajoled children to be quiet or to eat their lunches. That paddle, however, remained in full sight. Sometimes it was slapped loudly on a table top to get a student's attention, but sometimes there was no apparent reason for its brandishment. Once Wales moved to a table and playfully paddled one of the boys.

An aide assisted the supervision. She moved through the restless group of students blowing a whistle to get attention and to gain quiet. The first lunch group was dismissed after lining up by grades and the same scene was repeated during the next half hour.

Dr. Wales spent the next hour in his office. He talked to the observer about district's salary schedule. Wales was earning $28,500 that year. His wife also taught in the district and he disclosed that she was at the $17,000 level on the teachers' schedule. He mentioned that their combined salaries provided a comfortable life for their family but had not allowed them to purchase a new home that they desired.

Wales also discussed the district's Title I summer school program. He commented about the amount of work the program generated. He explained that SAT scores were used to determine student eligibility for the program. He further told about how a related federal guideline was circumvented. Federal law required that a parent committee, drawn from parents whose children would attend summer sessions, be formed to insure parent involvement in the local school. Wales indicated that all he really needed for compliance with the regulation were the signatures of eight parents on a form. It was immaterial whether or not the parents were actually involved in any of the planning for summer school. The impression he created was that he did little to encourage active participation by the parents.

A textbook salesman arrived at the school at 1:30 and spent fifteen minutes showing a new line of texts to Wales. Wales reminded the salesman about the extensive use his school made of that company's books. He made the point that he expected excellent service from the company.

After the salesman had left, Dr. Wales busied himself for fifteen minutes with a host of different matters. First, he checked on the magazine order the parent had complained about earlier in the day and secured the knowledge that the classroom teacher had the matter well in hand. Second, he was reminded by a faculty member that a teacher had to leave early that day for a dentist appointment, and he spoke to that teacher about a new insurance program the district was negotiating for its teachers.

Third, Dr. Wales checked on the condition of a storage area that a faculty member had complained about and found no problem with it. While walking to that storage area, Wales talked about two faculty members and their dependability, their "loyalty." The observer noted the beginnings of a pro-principal coalition forming among the staff.

At 2:00 PM, Wales visited a special English class that was in progress with the school's Vietnamese children. As a result of his complaint to the central office about the delay in instruction that had occurred at the rival elementary school, the special class was being held at Kensington for the first time. Six children, five boys and one girl, participated. Two teachers saw to their instruction.

On the return trip to Dr. Wales's office, two youths standing outside a classroom attracted Dr. Wales's attention and he inquired about their presence in the hall. One mumbled a response with his head hanging. Wales mimicked the student's muffled response and insisted that he speak up and speak clearly. The students reported, then, that they had not worked diligently during their math class. Wales inquired, "Why didn't you finish your math?" One of the boys said that it was hard to understand. He was interrupted as Wales said, "Blah, blah, blah, blah, blah. Speak up, I can't understand you."

Turning the corner to the principal's office, Wales found another child waiting his arrival. He had been sent to the principal for writing "fuck" on an exterior school wall during recess. To make matters worse, the student had done so while being disciplined for other inappropriate playground behavior. Dr. Wales pulled out his paddle and confronted the third grader, slapping the paddle in the palm of his hand as he talked. The boy began crying. Wales terminated the confrontation abruptly, telling the boy that he would not tell the child's parents of this behavior this time but that he must bring a scouring pad and clean the school wall on which the child had written. Wales's promise of "next time" seemed to formulate a repetitive pattern in his disciplinary dealings with students.

At 2:05 Wales headed for the teachers' lounge and remained there for ten minutes while eating a piece of fruit and then returned to his office, spending the next half hour in small talk with the observer. At 2:40, the superintendent of schools entered Wales's office. Superintendent George held a card with money attached in his hand. He was personally returning a loan to one of Kensington's staff. The two administrators gossiped a bit about the youth whose father and uncle had been slain. They speculated about whether the incidents had been drug related and the nature of the alledged drugs. Dr. George then shared an incident involving an irate social worker who was distraught over George's refusal to enroll a student in the school system. The argument hinged on whether or not the student actually lived within the attendance boundaries of the Milford School District. After delivering his card to the teacher he sought, Superintendent George left the building.

His exit was followed closely by Mrs. Susan Emory's entrance. Mrs. Emory, the school's counselor, was one of the two black women who worked at Kensington. Wales left his office and began to kid her, eventually rubbing the back of her hand, saying in effect, "I just wondered if some of the black would rub off." Emory ignored the joke and continued talking, albeit more tersely, about her values class. She left the administrative area after inviting Wales to join the session.

After a brief interlude, Wales decided to accept Mrs. Emory's invitation to observe her class and headed for her room. On the way he explained how, at a prior school, he teased a Jewish woman about being the school's "TJ", token-Jew, and how she had taken it in stride. He indicated that Mrs. Emory could participate in that sort of humor also.

During Wales's observation of the class, Mrs. Emory used him as an example of the "fairest" adult she knew. During the period, Dr. Wales commented to the observer that he appreciated Mrs. Emory's hard work and that her industry made up for some of her shortcomings. Several boys began to get restless during the class and Dr. Wales interrupted and asked if Mrs. Emory wanted him to take the boys out of the room. She indicated through non-verbals that she would rather deal with them herself. At 3:30 the values class ended with an abrupt dismissal by Mrs. Emory. At 3:40 after returning to his office, Dr. Wales ended his day and left Kensington for home.

This one-day view of Wales's professional life demonstrates the easy going style with which he typically handled most situations at Kensington. True to his word, we saw him disciplining students, buffering teachers from parents, checking on building maintenance, book orders, and insurance programs. Further, in his jovial way, he moved about the building talking with teachers and, sometimes less jovially, conversing with students. In short, Wales freed his teachers to teach. He did his best to maintain an orderly school environment at Kensington.

Summary and Implications

Our overall impression of Dr. Wales provides a stark contrast to the man who first steered the Kensington dream, Dr. Shelby. Wales hailed from the rural South, and was strong on family, church, and discipline. His professional and academic experiences were stronger preparation for secondary than elementary school leadership. His rise through the ranks seems to have resulted from his close relationship with Milford administrators and from his ability to get "the job done in the way they wanted it done." Dr. Wales defined the "way" as traditionalism--maintaining tight discipline and freeing teachers to teach.

The first principal, Shelby, on the other hand, was viewed during his short stay at Kensington as a "deviant outsider" by his administrative colleagues. He was never able to obtain the kind of support a "good ol' boy" network can provide. He was analytical and passionate in the pursuit of his educational vision. The image left behind at Kensington was of a man filled with true belief. When he left the Milford School District, he left seeking another opportunity to create his utopian school.

Jonas Wales on the other hand proffered a traditional pedagogy and held more modest hopes for his future. In his words:

> After this year I'll be 50 years old and I can retire in 10 years. At this point I have felt lightly about being a superintendent somewhere, but if an elementary principal's job is available in this district, I would probably stay as an elementary principal until I retire. I enjoy working with the teachers and the kids and if you go to be a superintendent, you're moved off away from both teachers and youngsters. (TI, 12/79)

At the end of Wales's first year as principal of the Kensington school, one of the other elementary schools in the district was closed. Wales and his staff were briefly worried that he would be replaced by the more senior, displaced principal. But, today, Wales remains at Kensington. His teachers breathe a continuing and collective sigh of relief. Apparently, Jonas Wales has found a home.

In conclusion, we must note an apparent irony about the Kensington principal. The "sigh of relief" that welcomed Wales to Kensington was based to a large extent on his reputation within the district, the "given" that he was a Milford staffer who represented the traditional philosophy of the front office, the school board, and the community. Much of Wales's success in his first two years as principal of Kensington was based on his ability to establish a familiar order at the school.

If he chooses, next, to move the school beyond this stage, to develop the institution as a more effective vehicle for student learning, he may find it necessary to move beyond his tenets for discipline and staff support. He may find the need to import a different instructional technology, a more effective organizational mode, or a more interventionist profile with his teachers. In this case, his "fit" with the system may erode.

Thus, Wales may face a dilemma: Do principals best meet their responsibility to a constituency by steering their school along the quietest, smoothest course, sailing with currents popular at the time? Or should they risk disturbing that steady flow, seeking excellence and innovation to provide an education more suitable to all of their students? This issue laps at the foundation of American public education, and raises the question of whether the purpose of schooling is to replicate society or to aid its reform and evolution. Clarifying this dilemma remains a complex, difficult task for observers and analysts of schooling.

CHAPTER 4

INSIDE CLASSROOMS

We return, now, to Kensington's classrooms. The multiple strands of influence we have described thus far end here. In the interactions of teachers and students, programs and visions are lost or realized. Here teachers interpret mandates from their leaders, synthesize that information with their own experiences and beliefs, and proceed about the business of teaching. In most instances we find them striving to adhere to the general orders and wishes of Wales and the district. Within these parameters, however, latitude exists. Individual members of the staff combine different procedures, styles, and personalities in the act of instruction.

We begin this discussion with a brief overview of the staff as a whole. Next, we compare the school's current and historical goals and objectives, and then describe the school's instructional technology. Taken together, these pages vividly paint Kensington's drift to the "old Milford type."

Kensington's Amiable Staff

Kensington's classrooms are led by 22 teachers: male and female, young and old, mostly White but one Black. They represent very similar views about schools and schooling even though they go about the act of teaching in various ways. As we met this group for the first time, one commonality among them was immediately apparent--many had rural roots.

Each morning Kensington's parking lot contained pick-up trucks that sported decals of deer, pheasant or leaping bass. We also heard frequent references to county fairs or saw staff trading photographs of prize livestock. They nodded knowingly over pictures of Herefords, Rhode Island Reds, or Hampshire Hogs. Finally, their background was expressed in their appealing down-home twang and use of colorful idiom.

One could not participate long in the life of the school without confronting this rural heritage of the staff as it came to bear on school situations. An example echoed through the school on our very second day of observation. Summary observations captured the event:

> A kid walked into Shaw's room uninvited at one point and Shaw whistled loudly. You knew she meant, "How could you be so far out of line as to just walk into my classroom?." . . . It was teasing and really funny, but you wouldn't have taken another step. (SO, 8/81)

The whistle reminds us of very basic aspects of life on the farm, calling in the pigs, or driving horses or cattle from pasture to barn. In many instances during the year, we watched as rural America came to the suburbs and saw how some of the best of its mores caught urban students--Black and White--in their captivating way.[1]

Another obvious characteristic of the staff was the genuine warmth they extended to one another, to students, and even to us. For the most part, they were an open-faced people, trusting and willing to help. These traits, too, fit well with the group's rural or small-town ambience. Their manner emerges in a description of an initial meeting between researcher and staff person, Mrs. Bernice Parks:

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[1] In a draft read by the faculty, some of the teachers criticized our portrayal of the rural quality of life at the school; some felt we overemphasized it or used this aspect of the school pejoratively. If anything, we may have responded too personally and warmly to this part of the school.

> Bernice was an interesting person to run into first. She was just a down-home gal. I would guess that her classroom would run that way--a house full of kids with the kids maintaining a respectful relationship to her. She went to great lengths to describe each of her own children. . . . As we left, Bernice, a white woman, watched a Black child come up to her with a big smile and got a big hug from her. The student initiated it. It looked like a very sincere gesture. (SO, 6/79)

A further example was observed in Kensington's resource center that featured two teachers, a parent volunteer and her infant daughter, and an obstreperous student:

> The librarian's aide today is a young Black woman who has brought her 18-month-old daughter with her. The mother is working shelving books. The child is following her about, "helping" to carry books. She's a very cute kid and gets a lot of attention. The librarian picks her up lovingly just as a teacher walks through the area. The teacher takes the child and says, "I see this little cutie, shopping sometimes." She plays with the youngster briefly, then leaves.
>
> A student comes running through the area. The librarian stops him and admonishes him, saying "Walk or I'll warm your fanny." (Her tone is completely non-threatening--more motherly than anything.) She then turns back to the infant, but the student virtually lights up with the attention he got from her. (FN, 9/79)

We can extend our small town image to include another aspect of the Kensington staff's collective nature, humor. Perhaps, more than any other ingredient, humor typifies the interaction most common among the staff. Dr. Wales's birthday party, described at the outset of Chapter 3, imparts one view of the practical jokes and jesting frequent in the school. But this comic play did not begin with Wales's arrival. One teacher commented on how that party had reminded her of earlier times. We reported the conversation in summary observations.

> I got a post reaction from one of the staff. Immediately after the party as I was walking toward the first grade room, a teacher asked me what I had thought of the party.

> I kind of laughed and joked, and she said, "Isn't it so nice?" referring to the humor and how Wales had taken it. Then she began to talk about an earlier principal at the school. They had done something similar for his party, only he had been bald headed and the staff had given him a mop toupee with a part in the middle which he wore all day. She alluded to the quality of the humor and the good feelings it created and how today's party was so similar. She was so pleased that it had developed so early in the year. (SO, 8/79)

Humor, either for fun or with a bite, is omnipresent with this staff. It flows through the staff lounge, runs through the classrooms and bubbles at staff parties. It functions to tie the staff into the school's history, socializes new members, and, as Dr. Wales commented, builds and maintains staff cohesion. We commented on the saga aspect of the joking at the school:

> We kept hearing pieces of stories. It was like that old joke where inmates in a prison heard the same jokes so many times that pretty soon, they just gave each joke a number. Somebody would call out a number and everybody would laugh.
>
> I think it was at the dinner party last year where the staff set each other off with just a catch phrase or word. But it speaks to us, at least, of the solidity of the social system and the fact that there are all these traces and pieces of humor around that are part of the lore of the group. (SO, 8/79)

The importance of a well developed sense of humor to the socialization of new staff members was apparent in another instance we reported. This episode was associated with Wales' birthday party and the new music teacher who made the red paper crown that Wales wore so happily.

> One teacher immediately complimented [the new music teacher] by saying, "Boy, our new music teacher's just right in there with us." (SO, 8/79)

The importance, even necessity, of participation in these jokes was further indicated by Wales, who in a previously cited interview, discussed that "fitting in[to]" the faculty social system was, in his view, a prerequisite for being hired at Kensington.

The function of humor in the maintenance of staff cohesion was revealed as we became privy to the fact that the faculty had evolved a language of code phrases and practices. One example of this in-group humor follows:

> The expression, "that's fine" and a special meaning for the phrase comes from a story of interaction of the staff and an irate parent. Everytime the parent would make a statement, they would say "that's fine," but what they actually meant was "bullshit." So now, when the staff wants to say "bullshit," they just say, "that's fine." It is a real inside joke. (SO, 8/79)

Another instance occurred when Wales first arrived at Kensington:

> Last year, before Wales arrived for his first staff meeting, one teacher came up and asked if the principal had arrived yet, and, then, as he entered said, "Thar she blows!" (SO, 8/79)

Such phrases, some more subtle, are passed among the faculty to alert one another to the arrival of administrators from central office.

Thus, in one form or another, humor pervades the Kensington school. We were somewhat surprised at the extent of it, particularly when it was so prevalent so early in the school year. We wondered if a warm-up period might be more usual and commented at the time:

> There was a humorous quality and congeniality at the end of the first week of school that we have rarely seen [in other elementary school faculties]. (SO, 8/79)

We speculate that the faculty joviality and solidarity stems from two sources. First, many of these teachers have taught together for a long time. More than one-third of the faculty has taught together since 1966. Four others have worked at the school for ten years. In short, the current staff is a very stable group. Second, in what we believe to be a somewhat unusual situation, the staff is bound together by extensive extra-school relationships. Consider the following:

- One new teacher attended the Milford schools from Kindergarten through high school. During all those years, she was a classmate of Kensington's current PE teacher.
- Another new staff member had previously taught at Kensington.
- The PE teacher is married to the first-grade teacher's daughter.
- The secretary's son is one of the custodians.
- Two of the women teachers have been roommates for years.
- More broadly in the system, one teacher is married to another Milford principal's daughter.

Finally, one teacher described the nature and extent of the faculty's out-of-school fraternization.

> There's a lot more going on than I see at other schools. I mean at Kensington a lot of my best friends and other [teacher's] best friends are members of the faculty. Whereas at some schools, at 4:00 when they go home, they never see those people. We usually TGIF once a month. We still get together for breakfast occasionally. We go to the theatre together during the year and get together sometimes in the summer. [The staff] is a really warm group. (TI, 5/79)

These extensive opportunities for in-school and out-of-school interaction breed a cohesive and familiar staff group at the Kensington school, a condition entirely in keeping with Homans's (1950) notions about human groups. In brief, Homans poses relationships between group interaction, sentiment, activities and norms; the more interaction and shared activities, the more likely a group's norms will coalesce and its members' sentiments about one another will be positive. Further, we might expect a great deal of similarity in instructional goals and objectives and teaching styles among the Kensington faculty. As the following sections will demonstrate, the faculty's beliefs about schooling and children and the teacher's role in the instructional process did, indeed, coalesce about a few basic tenets, and their instructional modes were very similar. In these aspects of the school, however, we find a significant shift in purpose from the original Kensington mission.

Pedagogy in Kensington's Classrooms

Goals and Objectives of Instruction

In 1971, we listed Kensington's original objectives:

> 1. To assist pupils to become fully functioning mature human beings.
> 2. To meet the needs of individual differences by providing a differentiated program.
> 3. To provide the skills, the structures, and the understandings which will enable pupils to identify worthwhile goals for themselves, and to work independently toward their attainment. (Smith & Keith, 1971, p. 32)

At that time, the faculty somewhat whimsically typified Kensington's thrust as developing "fully functioning Freddies" for society's future. The school's original goals were skill oriented and specified no content. They emphasized individuals and independent means of reaching unique and self-determined aspirations.

During the "golden years" of Edwards's administration at the school, a different set of goals were spelled out and listed in the Kensington Faculty Handbook. Those revised educational objectives were far more specific. Although they continued to emphasize skills, they contained many more references to instructional content. The reader will note that in this more recent statement of purpose, the individualism of Kensington's founding goals was lost.

> 1. To provide a general curriculum to meet the needs for living in a free society.
> 2. To provide for talented children through enrichment and acceleration of the regular program.
> 3. To provide for those children with limitations through the media of diagnostic and remedial measures.
> 4. To help all children acquire fundamental knowledge, habits, concepts, skill, values, attitudes, ideals, and appreciation appropriate to their level of maturity.
> 5. To lead children to think reflectively.
> 6. To train children in the acquisition of good study and work habits.
> 7. To help children to learn, to practice, and to appreciate personal, civic, and social responsibilities.
> 8. To develop within all children the understanding of the forces and ideals of American greatness.
> 9. To develop within children a love for the beautiful in its varied aspects.
> 10. To interest children in worthwhile activities in order to enable them to make profitable use of leisure time.
> 11. To develop a strong sense of ethical, moral, and spiritual values by providing a favorable climate for developing such values as courage, justice, right, reverence, obedience, and obligation.
> 12. To develop on the part of children an understanding that our democratic heritage is based upon a fundamental belief in God. (Doc., n.d.)

Most recently at Kensington, beyond the vague "students are to learn" and "teachers are to teach" rhetoric of Dr. Wales, these same goals, developed by Mr. Edwards, still preface the faculty handbook. Teachers, the individuals who interact with students most directly, described their educational goals in far less visionary terms. Their statements are more aligned with the back-to-basics rage. Examples follow:

> I guess what I'd like to see is more manners. . . . If you try to stop an argument or say, "I said stop now," you have to get very dogmatic about it. I feel. . . you got to put [discipline] in front of anything else. (TI, 10/79)
>
> The emphasis is getting through the books: math, English and spelling. I don't think we are doing a lot of extra curricular kinds of things. It seems like the kids are just having trouble getting through the basics. (TI, 10/79)
>
> We're veering toward getting into the content areas--especially social studies. The emphasis has been in 1st and 2nd grades on math and reading. Although we spend a great deal of time on them, we want to develop the [groundwork for the classes the students will face for the rest of their elementary school experience]. (TI, 10/79)
>
> Children are at school to learn. I think they have an obligation to obey the teacher and do what they are supposed to do. I think school needs to be structured and very much routine so that they can get the most out of their education. The idea is to get them so that they have some self-discipline. (TI, 10/79)
>
> To get along with each other. . . . To try to give them an introduction to junior high school because it is a completely different world [than elementary school]. . . . To try to pull everything they've had previously together and get the foundations all knitted together with the idea that if they don't know it themselves, where to go to find out. (TI, 10/79)
>
> The love of learning and reading. . . . You've got to get them excited. [The most important thing] is reading, just to be able to read and to capture the words on their own. (TI, 10/79)

Across these individual statements, several themes--reading, math, and discipline--emerge again and again. What seems most important to Kensington's teachers is the preparation of the student for further schooling. This very practical and immediate goal contrasts dramatically with Dr. Spanman's global visions and with Edwards's belief in the importance of preparing students to take their place in a future America.

Curriculum and Instruction

The Content of Kensington's Curriculum. Predictably, the curriculum of today's Kensington is more akin to traditional mores about the content of schooling experiences than those offered in 1964 to its first students. Those students entered a school guided by a bold manifesto:

> The curriculum is all pupil experiences while under the direction and supervision of the school. It depends on the goals and the kinds of adults we want. For example, we don't necessarily want adults who can name all 50 states, or 36 presidents. . . . We want adults who have developed effective language techniques, life-long habits of continuous learning, and values which guide them as individuals and members of society. . . . *There is no instructional curriculum.* We don't need to teach American history at the fifth grade or individual states at fourth grade. The curriculum is determined by the needs of the pupils. We don't need a crutch such as a text. (Doc., n.d.) (emphasis ours)

Today, students work from texts and move methodically through levels of reading, arithmetic, social studies, English, and spelling. Physical education, music and occasional science and art activities provide some variety to this basic diet.

The actual content of each course offering is extensively determined by the textbook that is selected by a district-wide committee for use at the school. Sometimes textbook companies intercede directly to affect the choice of books. For example, one teacher explained how Kensington began to utilize a new spelling program, one not used by the rest of the district.

> We use a different series of spelling books than any other school in the district. . . . The text company came into the district and offered to set up a pilot program in one or two schools. . . . Our school took it. They furnished all the books the first year because they had just published

> this [series]. . . . And then we had a big luncheon and we talked about how we liked the book . . . what needed to be changed . . . so that the next time they print the books . . . they are going to make these corrections. (TI, 11/79)

In either case, once a text is selected, teachers decide how to progress through those texts or which parts of them to delete entirely. Frequently, text material is augmented by exercises preferred by individual instructors. Dissatisfactions with various texts stem mostly from fears that student skills are generally too low to cope with some of the work or that necessary support materials, such as science equipment, are not available. The similarity of the curricular experiences for all of Kensington's current students can be seen in the school's master schedule (see Figure 4.1). As one progresses from first grade to sixth, there is simply little variation.

Insert figure 4.1 about here.

There are several reasons for the repetitious nature of this program. First, Kensington's principal and teachers believe in the importance of emphasizing basic education. This attitude coincides with both the broader national vision regarding education and the view of the school's own community. Second, although Kensington's original program was more varied, it was also more costly. The early emphasis on drama and art, for example, necessitated expensive, consumable materials. Milford's economic difficulties required cutbacks.

Another factor affecting the school's curricular limitations was explained by one of the teachers:

	Kindergarten	1st Grade	2nd Grade	3rd Grade	4th Grade	5th Grade	6th Grade
9:00	AM SESSION MATH AWARENESS	READING	READING	READING	READING	READING	SPELLING MUSIC/PE
10:00	CURRENT EVENTS ALPHA-READING	RECESS		RECESS	SOCIAL STUDIES	MUSIC/PE	MATH
11:00	FINE MOTOR SKILLS RECESS SNACK-REST STORY	READING LUNCH	RECESS LUNCH	MATH	MUSIC/PE LIBRARY RESTROOM/DRINK		READING
12:00	PM SESSION MATH AWARENESS	MATH LANGUAGE ARTS	SPELLING MATH	LUNCH ENGLISH (M-TH) FINE ARTS (F)	LUNCH SCIENCE	LUNCH SOCIAL STUDIES	SCIENCE LUNCH
1:00	CURRENT EVENTS ALPHA-READING	WRITING SOCIAL STUDIES	RECESS MATH	SOCIAL STUDIES RECESS	MATH	SPELLING	SOCIAL STUDIES
2:00	FINE MOTOR SKILLS RECESS SNACK-REST STORY	SOCIAL STUDIES MUSIC/PE RECESS	MUSIC/PE TV PHONICS	SCIENCE MUSIC/PE SPELLING	RECESS SPELLING HANDWRITING	RECESS SCIENCE STUDY PERIOD	ENGLISH HOME ROOM
3:00							

Figure 4.1 Kensington's Master Schedule, 1979

> Well, you can keep your AAA rating without having an art teacher at every school, but you have to have a music teacher. It's a matter of practicality. (TI, 5/79)

Thus, music remains and art is eliminated as state credentialing requirements add another determinant to those already affecting Kensington's curricular offerings.

Teachers at Kensington are dissatisfied with such limitations in program. Many of them supplement the meager art supplies provided by the district with supplies they buy themselves. This out-of-pocket art program permits some drawing and even ceramic activities in some classes. Frequently, these art activities serve as a reward for students who perform exceptionally or are very cooperative: more will be said about this token economy in a later section. Other efforts to vary the program include field trips, the parties mentioned in the interview with Dr. Wales, and extensive musical programs which owe their existence to the hard work of a particularly dedicated teacher. Another teacher still runs a stamp collecting club, again supplying the necessary materials at his own expense.

Some teachers, however, can only vent their frustration, feeling forced to turn otherwise interesting activities into routine paper and pencil exercises. One such instance occurred in science. A fourth-grade teacher spoke to that issue:

> I can't do much in science. . . . Usually we try to get a concept across to the class as a whole. And I do this by drawing pictures. I do a lot of true and false exercises and show films. We also take the science vocabulary and play a sort of bingo game. . . . We have a text, and I stick very close to it as far as the concepts that I try to develop. We have some laboratory equipment but [there is] no time to plan to use it and I've had some

> bad experiences. [The text] says all you have to do is pull it out and set it up and read the little chart, but it didn't turn out that way. . . . I've had a few experiences where my class was just left blank. . . . I can't think that fast on my feet. [The equipment] is not put together so that it is usable. (TI, 10/79)

We observed this same teacher's attempt to provide a laboratory experience for his students later in the year. The effort was aborted when he found that the thermometers that were essential for the exercise were no longer in the science kit.

In summary, the curriculum of Kensington, today, is a far cry from the ambitious, open-ended curriculum of the school's planners. The current content of instruction, however, does align with the more narrowly stated goals of the school staff, the district, and the community. It is consistent with the institution's ability to support the program financially.

Organization for Instruction. Just as Figure 4.1 demonstrates the similarity of curriculum content across grades at Kensington, it also shows that the organization of the school day is very similar for most classes. The staff's preeminent concern for reading instruction is responsible for much of this similarity. At all levels except the sixth grade and Kindergarten, reading begins the instructional day. Math seems to be the subject most commonly slotted after reading, then social studies or spelling. Kensington's staff follows the notion that difficult tasks should be scheduled earlier in the day, taking advantage of the student's fresh energy and attention for areas that teachers consider most important. Less demanding activities are scheduled in the afternoon in most instances. Beyond attention to the importance of reading, the rotation of students through physical education and music specialists constrains some choice in the timing of classes.

In addition to the similarities in class schedules, we found two consistent arrangements for the delivery of instruction common across classrooms at Kensington--grouping and teaming. Both of these structural aspects of instruction were responses to the diverse needs of the school's students and both affected the form of instruction as well.

Grouping describes the practice of dividing classes into smaller units based on some criterion of achievement or competency. The purpose of grouping is to allow teachers to focus on smaller numbers of students who have similar needs. Repetitious experiences for students who have mastered various skills are partially avoided; students work with the skills they possess towards the attainment of skills they have yet to master. The number of groups formed in a classroom depends not only on the number of ability clusters of students but on the teacher's ability to manage simultaneous activities. Further, teachers are aware that as the number of groups increases, supervision of the work of those groups decreases. The number of groups in classrooms, then, also depends on teachers' perceptions of their students' needs for supervision and guidance.

The Kensington faculty commonly worked with four or more groups at a time, a capacity Dr. Wales held in the highest regard. Sometimes the necessary number of groups outstripped the teacher's abiltiy to work with each group every day. One staffer described the solution:

> I've got the low [ability readers]. I've got six groups within that low group. . . . You don't get to all six of them everyday. No way you can. So while I'm working on one group, the other groups are either working on workbooks or reading by themselves. (TI, 10/79)

Students working independently on workbooks or dittos pages constitutes "seat work" in the minds of Kensington's teachers. Seat work pages are commonly printed in purple ink, and commercial varieties frequently bear catchy titles or are adorned with cartoons. A second-grade teacher continued the explanation of seat work:

> Well, during the home room period, that's just the period we prepare for the day, we get the lunch count, the roll and have the pledge. The children sharpen their pencils, get their drinks and really prepare so that they can sit down and get to work without running up and down. The first few minutes is spent giving out the seat work. The seat work consists of some spelling, some language, writing, and different skills in reading. . . . From there, after the children are settled and into their seats and understand what they're supposed to do, we go into our individual reading classes which are divided by the ability of each child. (TI, 11/79)

From first grade through sixth at Kensington, purple dittos were a pervasive phenomenon. Other teachers' comments revealed that dittos enter into the instruction of every subject.

> And I give them an activity sheet that I make up that goes with each unit in the spelling book. And then there are also ditto sheets that go with the spelling text. (TI, 10/79)

> Last week I started estimating decimals with the students. And some of the children really ran into problems. . . . So what I did, I got ditto material to reinforce [their skills]. (TI, 10/79)

> I'm using the old social studies series . . . because I don't have the official textbook in the school district. They don't have the money to buy it for me. So I use [the old one] as supplementary material. I have, through the years, constructed my own teaching units--20 or 25 of them--something like that--which covers everything in the text and more. I have ditto masters, depending on the unit, anywhere from three to eight or ten to go with every particular unit. (TI, 10/79)

> I found that some of the kids were finishing stories very quickly and that others were behind. So this wasn't working. I went to another teacher for help and she gave me some reading ditto materials that she had accumulated over the years. It was really nice, you know, it worked. The children [get] packets, that's what I call them, each week. One packet

> goes with each story. And they'll have to go through it and maybe look up dictionary words or things pertaining to a story. (TI, 10/79)

Several teachers kept dittoed pictures in their rooms that children could color when they completed other assignments.

Work sheets, purple dittos, were produced at Kensington by the hundreds. They occupied students when teachers were not directly available to them, provided means of remedial work, even permitted a vehicle for faster students to move ahead. Kensington's teacher-aide was often found churning dittos from a machine in a corner of the front office. Once again, teachers personally supplied this sea of materials.

> You buy them out of your own pocket. I just bought $125.00 worth of ditto books. (TI, 11/79)

Grouping, the practice supported by the omnipresent dittos, is an organizational device most teachers at Kensington feel locked into. The size of classes and the nature of the student body were the commonly spoken reasons:

> I have six reading groups.
>
> OBS: That strikes me as a lot of groups. How do you keep them busy?
>
> Seat work. Now, if we had not had such a large group, we had worked on games for them to play . . . stations. We were really enthused about this and kind of got the wind knocked out of our sails. Very disappointing. I have 29 children this year and my partner has 28. There was just not enough room to set up the stations. We had a spelling station, listening station, a math station and a language arts station. We even hoped to have an art station. (TI, 10/79)

This teacher explained how her children would have moved from station to station, mostly on an individual basis, completing the day's assignments. She continued:

> We hoped maybe we could do this if we ever got [the students] under control where we feel like they can take the responsibility for moving. It worked really well once, you see. When I came here ten years ago, it worked really well that way. I think you are finding children are more outgoing, squirming, uh, many are not taught manners or how to deal with the outside world. . . . Their attention spans were longer. They had self-discipline. . . . You read a lot of articles, and I find they are true, in my opinion. Too much sugar in their diets. . . . Too much television. . . . Too much freedom. . . . They are left alone too much of the time. It's hard to compete with all that in the classroom. (TI, 10/79)

Mr. Hawkins, Kensington's interim principal, had drawn the same conclusion about the shifting Kensington student body and the importance of grouping within classrooms.

> We learned a great deal [about] what we had to do. . . . Teachers were still trying to teach large groups . . . trying to teach like they had before and they expected the kids to know quite a bit. . . . I think they learned that they were going to have to put up with what we were getting, which were more or less pretty much lower achieving children than we had been working with. They had to drop the idea that they could group them in . . . big groups. I think if you go around now, you'll find . . . teachers will have about four reading groups. . . . And that's what they have to do--take them where they are and go from there. (TI, 5/79)

The other organizational device we found so common among the teachers at Kensington was teaming. Several teachers referred to the same practice as "departmentalizing." We might call it specializing. By whatever label, the practice involved sharing students across classrooms within the same grade level. Commonly, students would meet with a "homeroom" teacher in the morning and then rotate among other teachers for reading, math, spelling, social studies and science.

In part, teaming was another form of response to the diverse needs of the student group at Kensington. Where one teacher might be forced to "miss" certain groups on any certain day, teaming allows one teacher to focus on multiple levels of poorly skilled children while another works with middle-level, or higher-level groups. Thus, the practice reduces the diversity in a single classroom at a given time. With less diversity, there is a need for fewer groups and teachers can spend more direct instructional time with each youngster.

In addition, teaming provides elementary teachers an alternative to the burdensome load of multi-discipline preparations, a load that self-contained teachers must bear. This benefit accrues as teachers split their classes by subject as well as by achievement level. One team member assumes responsibility for math while another focuses on social studies, or science, or English. Frequently, teachers make this determination among themselves and capitalize on their own individual interests, skills and experiences.

Currently, teaming arises spontaneously and informally among teachers at Kensington. Successful teams evolve when staff members see ways of reducing their individual work loads and when they feel they will be able to interact successfully with the intended partner or partners. Many of Kensington's new classroom walls resulted from difficulties that occurred between individual teachers who had been formally assigned to work together in teams. Today, however, many of the faculty report positive attitudes towards the practice.

> As long as you keep departmentalizing where the kids can move around a little bit, I think it's for the better. . . . It makes a better learning atmosphere for the kids and it's certainly easier for me. If the teacher secludes herself, where she teaches all the subjects where she might be weak in a couple of subjects, it's actually a drawback for the kids. Teachers are stronger in some subjects and if they teach them, that's good. I think kids having different treacher get to know their views and their personalities. . . . It's . . . like life in general;

> they have to meet and talk and respect different people for what they are. (TI, 10/79)

There was, however, another view of teaming at Kensington. A third-grade teacher commented:

> I think I've become much more traditional since I've been here. I think I know a lot . . . about ways that I'd raise kids and things that I think work and things that I think won't work. I've been a self-contained teacher here for three or four years and I've really enjoyed that. I really prefer that. The noise gets to me after a while and I really enjoy having the same kids all day. They're your kids and I think you develop much more of a rapport with [them]. . . . You think of them as your kids because you know what's going on and I think a lot of problems get handled because you do have the same children all day whereas teachers who switch--I think some of them, when you only have students for a half an hour a day just put up with [problems]. I think a lot of serious problems are overlooked because of that. (TI. 11/79)

Despite such arguments for the self-contained classroom, the pervasiveness of the organizational devices--grouping and teaming--at Kensington would seem to indicate that some of Spanman's visions for the reform of education took hold in his model school and perservered throughout the trials and tribulations of the past fifteen years. In fact, this would be an erroneous assumption, for there are distinct qualitative differences between what teaming begets at Kensington today and what Spanman hoped for when the school was opened.

For Spanman, teaming connoted other closely associated concepts:

> The program was to capture team teaching with all of its varying organizational possibilities--ungradedness, total democratic pupil-teacher decision making, absence of curriculum guides, and a learner-centered environment. The idea to prevail was primarily that of freedom from staid educational means which, in turn, would unleash both faculty and students from the difficulties of the traditional and move toward an "individualized learning program." (Smith & Keith, 1971, p.11)

Teachers today reject this tie with the past. They see the importance of meeting the needs of individual students as the basic rationale for today's program. They reject the earlier means to that end. One faculty member expressed the point.

> One of the founding principles in this school evidently, though I wasn't there at the time, was that it was supposed to provide the child with their particular needs. And basically, that's what our program is doing now. . . . Although they were talking, you know, more about an open classroom type philosophy there. . . . They just didn't have any walls. Didn't have any textbooks either. (TI, 10/79)

Today, the meaning of "meeting individual needs" is limited mostly to those needs measureable by pre- and post-testing. Those tests determine a child's place on some performance, achievement or learning continuum and, to a large extent, dictate the nature of the student's learning experiences. In Kensington's case, the process offers children a consistency from year to year that provides a sense of security and control. But we believe that Spanman would argue that the process forces a stifling sameness on children, a condition antithetical to his visions. We find no malice in either approach. The discrepancy reveals, instead, a dilemma which educators have argued through centuries that span Rousseau and Skinner. It is a conflict of values that underlie basic images of man and of man's destiny.

Styles and Methods of Instruction

Despite the similarities in goals and curriculum within the current Kensington faculty, the act of instruction varies among the teachers. Differences seem linked to individual's personalities and experiences as well as to how each teacher perceives the needs and abilities of his or her students. For example, two teachers reflected in our interviews about how their own past experiences affect their present teaching style. The first attended a strict Catholic school as a child and recognized how those years had influenced her own classroom preference for order and discipline.

> I think I like a very organized classroom, and I think kids like sitting down when they're supposed to be. I don't go for everybody hither and yon, working on their own projects. I don't know if that's just my personality or something that dates back to the way I went to school. I think kids need some rules and regulations and that sort of thing. (TI, 10/79)

The second teacher perceived that his own childhood difficulties were a catalyst for his classroom style. That style depended on close and personal interactions with the students.

> I think the only thing a teacher can go by is his background. You know, they were in school and they might have learned to do something at college, but I think one of the biggest assets that I have is really my background. I came from a broken-family home and I was not a real bright student. I had troubles with some subjects but I really feel that my background and knowing how tough a family situation can be gives me a true insight to a lot of the kid's problems. . . . I think that's really helped me and helped the kids because they can come to me anytime and they can talk to me and I can really relate to them and tell them experiences I had. They just about drop their jaws because they don't feel that teachers are human. (TI, 10/79)

Other teachers insisted that they taught as they did because of the capacities of their students. One teacher stated her goal simply, "To take them where they are and move them as far as I can." She added parenthetically, "And sometimes, that's not very far." (TI, 10/79) Another stated a common perception among the faculty about how the students had changed since Kensington opened and how that change related to the shift away from the one-time "open" approach.

> There are some open suites but not as many as there used to be and I think the children--well, we've always had a lot of children from broken homes . . . but I think the kids were a little bit more sedate and they could handle a little less structure than the kids we have now. (TI, 11/79)

Thus, current teachers at Kensington appear to agree in their perception of how students differ now from the school's early days. They agree on the need for more structure, too. They remain, however, idiosyncratically tied to various means to reach that more structured end.

These various instructional styles can be described by the categories developed by Bossert (1979): recitation, class task, and multitask. At any moment, a visitor to Kensington may find examples of each.

Recitation: Mrs. Baur's Third Grade Class. Bossert defines recitation as "an activity that involves the whole class or a large group of children in a single task: The children listen to the question the teacher asks, raise their hands, wait to be recognized, and give an answer . . . the teacher usually controls the flow of questions and answers." (p. 44) This common pattern of classroom interaction is readily found at Kensington throughout its seven grades. Our field notes illustrate one such activity, a handwriting class in the third grade.

> The class begins. Mrs. Baur asks students what they studied yesterday. Together, they answer, "M." Mrs. Baur tells the students that the letter N will be easier and asks why. A student raises his hand and answers, "One hump."
>
> Mrs. Baur asks students to write N in the air. The children raise their writing hands and trace the form of the letter. The teacher traces the letter with them. Her movements are backward so that they appear correct from the students' perspective.
>
> She stops briefly and tells a student not to stretch his shirt. "It will not look nice if it's stretched out." She continues discussing the letters using

> names for letter shapes like "hooks" and "humps." As Mrs. Baur talks, she stops mid-sentence to ask a question--almost like a fill in the blank item. The children enthusiastically pick-up on these cues for a response. Mrs. Baur repeats each student's response. Her tone is reassuring. Emphasis is on the first syllable of the child's answer if it is correct. If the answer is incorrect, her inflection changes, making the statement a question. Many students have an opportunity to respond.
>
> She takes students through each step of the writing exercise. She then distributes a ditto and tells students to put their names on it. She explains the assignment, speaking slowly, loudly, distinctly. "Put your pencils down." She checks to see if all pencils are down. Then says, "Who's going to make their letters touch the lines?" Most hands go up. "Who's going to write too small?" No hands go up. Her style encourages participation. Hands go up, but there is no shouting out. (FN, 9/79)

Baur's deliberate pace guided the class, together, through the lesson. Order and control seemed to characterize the activity, as did eager participation by the students. She was able to remain aware of each child's performance from her position in front of the class, noting inattention and instantly terminating any unwarranted activity.

Class Task: Mrs. Alford's 5th Graders. Returning to Bossert, we find class task defined: "Work sheets, tests, math assignments, or other tasks assigned to the entire class fit into this category." (p.44) The second day of school, we found Mrs. Alford preparing her students for a seat assignment in reading. Field notes, again, describe the episode:

> Mrs. Alford sits behind her desk at the front of the room. She greets students who enter, then calls on rows of students one by one to sign up for lunch and turn in homework. She speaks in a soft and gentle voice to both praise and admonish students. Notably, on the second day of school, she addresses each child by name.
>
> She instructs reading groups to get their respective books (the students are grouped according to reading achievement level). Mrs. Alford then gives some brief "get started" instructions. She leaves the room briefly to take two students to a remedial reading class meeting elsewhere in

the building. The students who remain talk in her absence. Three students begin to work on the assignment. One student, isolated in the rear of the room, is working in a notebook and is very absorbed in his activity. Mrs. Alford returns. The isolated student moves about the room to sharpen his pencil. Another teacher enters and whistles loudly. She then singles out one boy and says, "Come on over here. You just got promoted!" The student joins her reading group for the remainder of the period.

Mrs. Alford directs her students' attention to particular pages of work and asks them to complete them quickly and turn them in to her before the end of the period. Apparently, there are two separate groups in the room at this point, working on separate reading assignments.

Mrs. Alford finds one student without a workbook. She leans over him and says, "Are you with us this morning, sir? Where's your book?" The student holds his position and says, "I didn't get one." Mrs. Alford says, "How many times this morning did you hear me ask if anyone needed a book?" She gets a book for the student.

The assignment for both groups is a pre-test. She explains that they need not worry over it: "We just need to see what you need to work on." The lone boy in the rear of the room again moves to sharpen his pencil. Mrs. Alford asks what "emphasis" means. No one is able to define it, though two students try. She explains the word in the context of her assignment and then asks if there are further questions. Two students raise their hands. She moves to them individually as other students begin work.

Alford leaves the room again. All the students are working and the class is totally quiet for the first time this morning. A new student enters the class. Alford has not yet returned. Other students begin to talk again. One student attempts to talk to the single student at the rear of the room, but the boy does not answer him.

One student appears to finish his assignment. He begins to talk to others who are still attempting to work. Mrs. Alford returns and begins to circulate through the room, checking students' work and quietly encouraging others. She then attends to the new student. The isolate again returns to the pencil sharpener. A student walks to Mrs. Alford's desk and quietly asks a question. Mrs. Alford responds loudly, "Oh, no, that would be cheating." She asks for the attention of one of the two reading groups and begins to explain the complicated lay-out of the workbook page. Other students begin approaching her desk during the explanation and

> a line forms. Mrs. Alford ends her instructions, saying, "Now I have you all confused. Right?" She begins talking quietly with each student in the line. The first student to ask a question has returned to Mrs. Alford's desk and is smiling broadly, apparently pleased with her work. The tone in the room is happy and industrious. There are no sounds, except for a steady hum emitted by the fluorescent light fixtures.
>
> One boy turns around in his seat to look at his neighbor's paper and begins a comparison with his own. Satisfied, he turns back around and resumes work. Mrs. Alford is grading papers at her desk. One student completes the assignment and turns the papers into the teacher. She instructs him to continue with an assignment begun the day before. The isolate approaches Mrs. Alford's desk and submits his work. He returns to his own and begins to look busy. He takes out paper and pretends to write. Mrs. Alford calls him back to her desk and begins to review his work with him.
>
> Fifteen minutes into the work, a triad of boys begins to talk and giggle. Other students look around. Mrs. Alford meets one child's eyes with a steady and stern stare and asks, "Don't you have anything better to do?" The boy points at the instigator of the disturbance with a helpless look on his face. Mrs. Alford ignores the innuendo. The student returns to work.
>
> Ten minutes later, there is wide spread restlessness in the room. Movement and chatter characterize most of the students' activity. Mrs. Alford announces the approach of the end of the period and tells students to prepare for their next class and to turn in their work whether or not it is complete. (FN, 8/79)

Again, this is a strikingly familiar scenario. Subsequent observations in the same classroom produced similar episodes punctuated, perhaps, with more interruptions or non-task related activities initiated by the students. Class task assignments permit teachers more opportunity to work with individual students than recitation, and more time to provide guidance and encouragement. In the various instances of class task we observed, control was never as tight or direct as in recitation; the teacher was never as aware of every student's activity.

"Multitask," at least in our observations, provides even less opportunity for control, but a significantly greater opportunity for individual work and progress.

Multitask: Mrs. Shaw's Bustling Bee Hive. The term multitask explains itself, but for symmetry, we return one last time to Bossert's definitions.

> The third type of task structure is the multitask organization, which usually includes tasks like independent reading, small group and independent projects, artwork, and crafts. These activities involve the greatest amount of pupil choice in organizing and completing the work. . . . The distinctive characteristic of multitask settings, however, is that many different tasks are being worked on simultaneously. (p.45)

Mrs. Shaw's classroom was a veritable prototype of multitask organization. The room's physical appearance, the noise level, and the amount of student movement were immediate cues that something different from other Kensington classrooms occured here. Visitors who might have suspected that this was the classroom of a young and idealistic teacher would have been surprised. Mrs. Shaw was a veteran, an older teacher among the staff.

Indeed, Mrs. Shaw was the "old timer" in the Kensington faculty system, having begun teaching at the school the same year Edwards took control of the program. In many ways, after a long and respected career in the classroom, she remained a believer and advocate of the innovations which characterized Kensington's start. She was one of the few remaining teachers who believed that the walls dividing the original open spaces were a sad accommodation to changing students and teachers. Once again, our field notes relate the essence of her teaching environment and a glimpse of her style:

The passing of two weeks has allowed a number of changes in Mrs. Shaw's classroom. A plant light has been hung over a trough in the rear of the room that is now filled with milk carton "flower pots" from which plants are beginning to sprout. In another corner of the rear area is a table filled with models of log cabins and pioneer scenes. These are in the process of construction and are made from bits of wood, clay and cardboard. A model Indian village sits on top of a cabinet. Two strands of twine have been stretched from the front of the room to the rear above head level. Paper bats (for Halloween) and student-made geometric constructions hang from the lines. Three mobiles and a model of the "Eagle III" balloon also dangle in the overhead space.

A test has just been administered and completed. One group of students sits about Mrs. Shaw's desk checking answers. The kids are concerned about whether their responses are correct and keep asking, "Is this right? Is this right?" They vie for Mrs. Shaw's attention.

From time to time Mrs. Shaw calls on students outside the test group, and asks if some item of work has been completed. Those students work at their independent tasks. Others are working with math puzzles constructed of boards, pegs, and disks. (These puzzles were made by Mrs. Shaw.) She asks one group of boys if they are playing by the rules: "Are you playin' right? 'Cause if you're not you don't have your thinkin' caps on."

The check group finishes with Mrs. Shaw and she begins a question and answer social studies lesson with another small group. She simultaneously begins ten other students working on the completion of an incomplete reading assignment. The rest of the students continue to work with the math games or chatter among themselves. The room is moderately noisy.

Two boys steal over to the coat rack and sneak into a lunch box. One boy takes something out and the other acts as a screen, blocking Mrs. Shaw's view and awareness of the episode. They go over to another corner of the room to examine their contraband and are joined by a third student. They are engrossed in the set of baseball cards the one student removed from his lunch box.

The period comes to an end. The owner of the cards returns them to his lunch box while another begs to have them. As this discussion continues they visibly keep one eye, and probably one ear, on the instructions Mrs. Shaw gives for the next activity. The groups and activities shift. (FN, 10/79)

As distinct as these three styles of instruction appear in our short vignettes, one may wonder about their relative merit in terms of effective instruction and student achievement. In reality, things are not so simple. In the experience of most, if not all, of Kensington's students, instructional modes melded as the children interacted with a variety of teachers during each school day. To further complicate the picture, we did not observe any teacher utilizing only one form of instruction. Recitation teachers intiated class tasks, and our multitask exemplar shifted easily into the recitation mode of instruction. She used class tasks as well. No determination of the relative benefits of the various forms of instructional activities was made.

The choice of instructional mode made by any teacher at Kensington seemed more closely related to their concerns for order and control than to any understanding of the social or academic benefits that might be associated with each of them. They ardently believed that before their charges could be educated, control had to be established. Tales of extreme student misbehavior in the years prior to our return study were freely offered in defense of their emphasis on discipline. Merited or not, Kensington's staff used an arsenal of control schemes to keep their students engaged in academic tasks.

Control for Instruction

A complete description of the nature of life and work in Kensington's classrooms requires this final section about discipline and motivation. These topics may seem a peculiar pair at first, but the logic that leads to their simultaneous discussion stems from the fact that both were seen by Kensington's teachers as forms of inducement that lead to student learning.

The faculty described the sanctions they would employ to encourage or discourage student behaviors; discipline denoted negative sanctioning, and motivation was synonomous with positive reinforcement. Their repertoire of inducements included coercive, remunerative and normative acts, a typology with which Etzioni (1961) characterized organizations. In this instance, the three categories lend themselves to the description and definition of an important aspect of the Kensington School.

Coercion: The "Essential Nightmare." Jules Henry (1965) writes:

> School creates what I have called the essential nightmare. The nightmare must be dreamed in order to provide the fears necessary to drive people away from something (in our case, failure) and toward something (success). (p.321) (emphasis his)

Coercion can be thought of as the use of raw power to get someone to do something they might not otherwise do. In the case of Kensington and most public schools, that power is often more imagined than real, and teachers may go to great lengths to maintain the illusion. Thus, the "nightmare" metaphor selected by Henry is particularly fitting. At Kensington, however, we found several brief instances where the nightmare was lived rather than dreamed. The example which follows may evoke childhood fears and provoke ire, but in fairness to the teacher, the situation probably merited her actions.

The specific episode developed after an upper-grade teacher returned from a week-long absence. Her students had been openly belligerent towards the substitute teacher and refused to comply with the bulk of her requests or demands. We observed the room for short periods during that week and noted the generally rowdy behavior of students, the littering of floors, and the purposeless movement of students about the room. Little work was accomplished and attempts by other faculty, and even Dr. Wales, to intervene brought only brief respites from the uncooperative behavior of the students. The situation was dramatically altered by the returning teacher. Field notes relate some of the events and the ambience the teacher, Mrs. Fuller, created:

> Mrs. Fuller is sitting at her desk. Four boys are seated together near the front of the room. I recognize them as four of the worst behaved students from last week. I asked if I might visit today and she said loudly, "Sure, you'll find out that there are people here who don't know how to act when I'm gone."
>
> She is berating her students, telling them to work faster, and work more. The room is deathly silent except for her remarks. One of the boys at the front of the room asks how to spell a word. She glares at him and says, "I don't know how to spell anything! That's what you have a dictionary for!" The children are cowed. Student behavior is very different from last week. Ironically, a note is chalked on the front board that reads, "Welcome back Mrs. Fuller."
>
> Mrs. Fuller is writing letters to parents of students, informing them of their children's various behaviors from the prior week. As she finishes a note, she calls the subject of the letter forward, gives him the note, and has him write his name on the front board so that the return of the note and the parent's signature can be checked the next day.
>
> The youngsters in the front of the room are writing apology notes to Dr. Wales and letters to their own parents. One child gives his note to Mrs. Fuller. She reads it out loud and says, "Does this sound right?" Several grammatical errors are evident. She disgustedly crumples the paper and hands it to the boy. "Do it again!" This happens several times with each of the four students at the front of the room.
>
> More students begin to enter the classroom and quietly find seats. As she calls on individuals, they almost leap from their seats to respond. She addresses the whole group: "While I was absent last week, my substitute had a lot of trouble from you people. . . . The next time I have a sub in here and you give her all kinds of trouble and you can't cooperate, you will write all day. Do you hear me? (She has not raised her voice, but speaks deliberately.) You are being

> unfair to the substitute, but mostly you are unfair to yourselves."
>
> She tells them to get their homework assignments and asks to see the hands of people without papers. Four students, three boys and one girl, raise their hands. Mrs. Fuller raises her voice, looks hard at the nearest offender and says, "Where's your paper?" She moves to the next and physically removes a child in front of the first so that she can glare directly into the student's downcast eyes. She moves to the next. The boy's eyes are wide and his eyebrows raised. He says nervously, "I didn't do mine." She mimics the student sarcastically, "I didn't do mine." She takes her grade book and examines the boy's record. She says, "I am telling you, if I have to retain you next year, I won't lose one night's sleep over it. It won't bother me one bit, so don't be telling me, 'I didn't do mine!' At 11:00 you will have a paper for me on my desk or you'll get three good licks. Your paper will be your passport out of here."
>
> She has a student collect the completed papers but only gets eight out of 18. Only four children had admitted that they had not done their work. She grades the first paper and finds more answers incorrect than correct. She glowers at the class and tells everybody to get on with the assignment and that they better get all of the answers correct. She says, "I don't know how you are going to do it, but you'd better do it!"
>
> She returns a paper from the previous week to the boy who had said, "I didn't do mine." Twenty out of 20 answers are incorrect and each problem has a heavy blue "X" marked through it. She sends another boy to the next classroom for a paddle. She glares at the student, waiting for the other's return. The paddle is delivered. It is a fraternity hazing paddle, two feet long, three inches wide, three-eigths of an inch thick, and has a handle.
>
> The teacher from whom she borrowed the instrument enters grinning broadly and says, "Are you going to use it now?" When Mrs. Fuller doesn't respond, the other teacher replies, "Gee, I never get to have any fun." Mrs. Fuller retorts, "Come back about 11:00. We're going to have lots of fun!" There is no humor in her voice. (FN, 9/79)

This particular episode ended with students being given extra time to complete their assignments and with no child being spanked. As in the instances we reported involving Dr. Wales, the threat of corporal punishment was more frequent than actual paddlings at the school. But the "nightmare" had been vivid that day in Mrs. Fuller's class.[2]

Other common coercive acts included extra writing assignments, holding students in classrooms during lunch periods or at recess, separating students from their friends, sending notes home to parents, and sending students to face Dr. Wales. Near the end of Dr. Wales's first year, an after school detention program was created to provide an additional consequence for misbehavior. In addition to these, we observed various instances where punishments "fit the crime." One young girl, for example, wore a wad of chewing gum on the end of her nose for an hour after violating the no chewing gum rule.

One teacher's program of discipline involved students taking turns as class policeman. The designated student would stand in front of the class and write names of students who disobeyed class rules on the blackboard. Tallies would be added for subsequent offences. The teacher would assign punishments at the end of the class period depending on the severity and the number of violations. The same teacher wore a whistle about his neck. Occasionally, its brass sound would echo through the school as the teacher attempted to quiet or reprimand an entire class.

We must wonder whether these means of gaining control of student behavior in classrooms satisfied the teachers' ultimate motive for their use. We might ask if children are brought to greater understanding or whether their performance is enhanced by such means. Henry worried the same point. He concluded the thought which opened this section on coercive measures: "In this way children, instead of loving knowledge become embroiled in the nightmare."

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[2] Again, responding to a draft, many of the faculty felt this section overemphasized the negative aspects of strong discipline. A far worse "nightmare," they believe, is chaos in the classroom. They found other methods of discipline increasingly ineffective with Kensington students.

The effectiveness of coercive discipline may depend on student perceptions of the legitimacy of a teacher's right to punish, and the consistency and fairness in the meting out of punishments. Spady (1974) and Spady and Mitchell (1979) tease this point from their considerations of power and authority in schools. They develop a "catch 22" argument about situations in which coercive dicipline may be most needed. Where students are least cooperative, coercion is most likely to result in further rebellion; alienated students are least likely to accept the legitimacy of teachers and school principals.

Some educators and psychologists believe that coercive discipline leads only to temporary changes in student behavior. This argument leads to the concept of positive reinforcement and our next section.

Remuneration: Carrot on a Stick. In today's popular educational parlance, remuneration is more commonly discussed as token reward systems or behavior modification. These forms derive from behaviorism. Dollar (1972) describes the central tenet of behavioral approaches: "When a teacher desires a response to occur more frequently, she must provide a reinforcer for that response." (p. 14)

The reinforcer is thought of as a reward, and rewards are defined as anything which encourages the student behavior desired by a teacher. Dollar delineates three types of rewards: a) "concrete," e.g., candy or toys; b) "activity," e.g., building blocks, painting pictures, putting on a play; and c) "social," e.g., smiles, pats on the back, verbal congratulations (pp. 16-18). According to behavioral theory, reward must follow behavior. Each of these types of reward structures was used at Kensington.

Given the warm and personal nature of the staff, social reward for student work was most prevalent at the school. Gestures which demonstrated care for students were a natural part of teachers' repertoires of behavior. The common use of social rewards might also be explained in that social rewards place no strain on organizational resources. Gestures are free; they require no material consumption; they require no coordination with other staff; they do not disturb the flow of planned activities.

Activity as reward was less common, perhaps because permission to be active in an elementary school impinges on the prerogatives of other staff, requires advanced thought and preparation, and necessitates the allocation of time, space, and materials. Use of the library, extended recesses, board games, movies, and coloring were frequently observed activities awarded individually or to whole classes for good behavior or mastery of some task. At times art and science lessons were promised to students for diligent work. One teacher treated all of his classes to a special lesson which involved the use of a police radar gun to clock the velocity of tennis balls thrown by each student. Like most of the activity rewards we observed, this exercise had nothing to do with regularly planned class activities. It was, nonetheless, an exciting extra for students.

Concrete rewards, although requiring the greatest forethought and resource consumption, were also frequently used to encourage student involvement in class activities at Kensington. Some of these "token" schemes were elaborate. In one class, students earned points during classes for completed assignments, for bright responses, and for reading books obtained at the school library. These points could be "cashed" in at the end of each week for candy or small ceramic knickknacks provided by the teacher. These small objects could be painted during school time but only after regular work was completed. Points could be accrued week by week for more elaborate clay objects. For instance, it was theoretically possible to build an entire set of chess pieces during the year. This scheme required a careful record keeping system or "bank" and an outlay of clay and paints which were paid for by the teacher. She further donated the molds from which the objects were made and the time during which she prepared the slip, poured the molds, and fired the menagerie of small animals, cars, dolls and chess pieces.

There were many variations on this scheme throughout the school. Some teachers kept grids on their blackboards or had them drawn on large paper and hung on bulletin boards. These became public score cards for students' accrual of tokens. Others preferred to keep the record more private in small notebooks or on separate pages of their grade books. One teacher preferred more immediate gratification for his students and presented them with stamps, stamp hinges or glassine envelopes--contributions for their own collections which he had encouraged them to begin during the school year. Again, this teacher paid for these materials himself.

In most instances, teachers who utilized the concrete reward scheme also exercised the option to cancel accrued points when students demonstrated negative behaviors. Dollar calls this "reward cost" (p.22). At Kensington, this most often meant that students' points were simply subtracted from the record book or chart, a simple matter of erasure. In the school's special education classroom, however, another strategy prevailed.

In that room, a large, brightly colored, paper elephant occupied an entire bulletin board. On its side, a paper pocket bulged with peanuts. As students entered the classroom for remedial classes they would take three peanuts from the cache. These were placed on their desk tops as they sat down. During the lesson, each instance of negative behavior was reprimanded by the confiscation of one peanut. At the end of the lesson, students could choose to eat their remaining peanuts or submit them for points which could be cashed later for more interesting rewards.

The systematic evaluation of the effectiveness of this remunerative mode of classroom control lies outside the purview of this study, but we were left with several impressions from our observations, particulary of the concrete reward systems. Students were concerned with the fairness of this method and argued with teachers and other students over the accuracy of point records. They sometimes expressed concern over the apparently capricious manner in which points were subtracted from their totals. The public nature of the schemes contributed to accusations of "teacher's pet." Lastly, problems arose at times over lost or "stolen" trinkets. In short, we wonder, as did Henry over the effects of coercion, if children might become unnecessarily embroiled in remunerative forms of motivation--more aware of the tokens than the learning they purportedly encourage.

A Normative Approach to Discipline and Motivation. This final category describes an alternative to both stick and carrot for classroom control and motivation. The Kensington exemplar of the normative approach was Mrs. Baur. She emphasized a code of behavior, a set of expectations, to her students at the very beginning of the year.

Subsequently, she would refer to these expectations to solve most instances of misbehavior or lack of cooperation inside and outside her classroom.

The first example of this mode we observed occurred on the playground. Two young students had been fighting and were interrupted by Mrs. Baur. Rather than invoking the wrath of the principal for their behavior, Mrs. Baur had the children explain the issue over which they fought. She then told them to sit down on the playground, pretend they were brothers and settle the problem as if they were having a family quarrel. Apparently, this analogy presented the children with an option that allowed them to transfer a familiar form of problem resolution from home to school. In minutes the children returned to Mrs. Baur to tell her of their solution and went off to play for the remainder of the recess period. At the time we remarked on the effectiveness of this teacher's strategy.

Later in the year, during observations in her classroom and in interviews, we found Mrs. Baur's playground strategy consistent with her mode of classroom control. Her own words captured the essence of this normative form of motivating and disciplining students:

> I guess I set down certain boundaries at the beginning of the year and I try to make them stick. . . . [boundaries] like talking and following directions and paying attention and fighting and arguing and all that kind of thing. You know, things that take time out from the teaching day. Hopefully, if they know the rules, they aren't going to do too much against them.

With the voice of experience, she added:

> However, with some of the kids in the class that's not the case. They are trying all the time. (TI, 11/79)

On the face of it, this tactic may not appear too different from other teachers' systems of rules and consequences for infractions. In fact, the procedures are very different from the "don't smile 'til Christmas" variety.

As episodes unfolded in Baur's primary-grade room--student participation in lessons, instances of inattention, incorrect responses, talking out of turn--we saw her frequently and warmly touch students, and speak to them in gentle, caring, and respectful tones. Comments like the following were typical: "Come on, Tania, I can't check your work if you haven't done any." "Good, Seth!" "Oh-Oh, that's awful small." "No, Ramone, honey, you only need to do one of each." "Oh, that's good writing, Jim!"

On one occasion, standing next to a young boy, watching him struggle with a lesson, she casually commented, "Brian, next time the nurse is here we're going to get your eyes checked." Another time she commented on a little girl's sniffles and gave her a few tissues. These gentle admonitions, reminders, and suggestions were woven among very clear instructions for lessons. It was typical for her to visit each student during every activity and make personal comments to most.

Mrs. Baur added a firm touch to this gentleness. She stated her beliefs:

> The idea is to get them to have some sense of self-discipline. . . . There are times when children should be spanked, but I don't think that is the basic philosophy one should have; they're not going to learn anything from that. You know, when they grow up, nobody's going to be there with a club. So the idea is to get them to [behave] because they know that's the thing to do. (TI, 11/79)

Her way of gaining such voluntary compliance was to set the rules early and to follow them consistently.

> If I make a statement, I try to follow through with it. If I say you will stay in for recess

> if you don't finish your work, I try to follow through on it. I think that is the way to be. (TI, 11/79)

Clear expectations, consistency, and sensitivity to children developed an ambience in her classroom which we compared to a family setting. Like the epiosode in the school yard, problems could be dispensed with quickly and without upsetting youngsters unnecessarily. Frequently Mrs. Baur's solutions hinged on an appeal to think about relationships between involved parties or about the feelings of others. In her classroom, the "Golden Rule" prevailed.

One last episode from her classroom was recounted by Mrs. Baur. It captures the best of her approach:

> Okay, this little girl was really on her ear for several days. She's just been in really a lot of trouble . . . just pouting, nothing is right. So I got a note. . . something about "I hate you, you're a bitch, crap you"--lovely, lovely note. All spelled wrong. Yes it was really, really a terrible note.
>
> I didn't say anything during school. That's one of the problems. You don't have enough time to handle all of the discipline that you'd like to because the other students end up going to pot. So I had her stay after school. . . . I didn't ask her if she had written the note or not. I assumed she had. I think if they know they're going to get into trouble . . . if you ask them: "Did you do this?"--a lot of them will say, "No." You don't give them the chance to lie.
>
> I knew that really getting after her was only going to make her madder. . . . So I just showed her the note and asked her how she thought I felt . . . and I said, "I was just really sad and that I thought we were friends and I hope you just never do it again."
>
> She started to get tears in her eyes but she didn't cry. But she looked real remorseful. I said, "Now, what do you think we should do with [the note] so I don't have to look at it anymore?"
>
> She looked like she didn't exactly know what to say, but finally she said, "Let's throw it in the trash can so that nobody has to look at it." (TI, 11/79)

Conclusion

Our analysis of the curriculum and instruction offered at the Kensington School during its first year described the myths and realities of teaching at that school. In Chapter 5 of Anatomy of Educational Innovation, Kensington's innovative teacher-pupil relationships were discussed. Chapter 7 characterized instructional teaming as cooperative teaching, and Chapter 9 examined individualized instruction.

A small part of that lengthy discussion of the original instructional program was summarized in a figure reproduced here as Figure 4.2. The figure summarizes five instructional approaches, hierarchically arranged to demonstrate one of Kensington's original goals--to help all children reach Level 5, "Pupil choice in goals, materials, and rates."

Insert Figure 4.2 about here.

We believe that one reality of first-year Kensington was that its students were scattered throughout the five instructional levels. In 1979, many years later, the school's students worked at levels 1 and 2, most used the same textbooks within grade levels and moved together or at independent rates through them.

At the school today, there is no regret over this change. As we have noted, substantial consensus exists among parents, board members, central office personnel, principals, and teachers for the more traditional forms of instruction and for emphasis on basic skills. If we were to attempt to summarize the Milford's collective sentiment about

Level		
5	Pupil choice in goals, materials, and rates	Pupils determine ends, means, and rates of progress. Kensington's ideal.
4	Different goals, different materials, and varying rates	Pupils work toward different ends (for example, enrichment) which involves different materials and varying rates as well.
3	The same goals but varied materials and rates	Children are directed toward the same outcomes but may branch into special material (often remedial).
2	Individualization: variation in rate	Possible variation in starting point; some children move through the material faster.
1	Traditional lock-step	All children in the same books and materials, moving at the same rate toward the same goals.

Figure 4.2 An initial conception of individualized curriculum and instruction.

the movement away from the original Kensington ideals, it would be: Given our conservative community, limited resources, and numbers of low-skilled children, we ought to be proceeding in our schools exactly as we are.

Finally, we wish to comment on an important deja vu experience. Before Kensington ever existed, we described in great detail a classroom in the Washington School in The Complexities of an Urban Classroom (Smith & Geoffrey, 1968). In that volume we blended the observer's view of the classroom with the intimate experiences of the classroom teacher who was second author on the project. Currently, as we considered what Kensington had become, details of the analysis in Complexities came to mind. In many ways, the classrooms at Kensington strikingly parallel Geoffrey's classroom. In effect, the innovative and cosmopolitan educational experiment we called Kensington had become another Washington School.

The present program at the school is more compatible with Kensington's staff, students, and community, but we miss the spark of excellence Spanman and Shelby--with all their shortcomings--tried to ignite in Milford. We felt the absence of that same kind of spark at the Washington School. We find this thought disturbing. Although some may find these statements predjudicial, we wonder when and where and under what circumstances such a flame might catch and burn brightly.

CHAPTER 5

BETWEEN THE LINES: AN EMERGING CONCEPT OF ORGANIZATIONAL IDENTITY

The opportunity to make predictions and return to examine the actual course of events is probably rare in the world of social science or educational research. Kensington Revisited provided just such a chance. Fifteen years ago we studied the first year of operation of an innovative school (Smith & Keith, 1971). The school building was new and of radical design. The faculty had been brought together from all parts of the country. The approach to curriculum, teaching, grouping, and administration was as different from the norm for public elementary schools as was the architecture of the building itself.

At the end of the first year, we had observed a number of events and conditions that led us to believe that the innovative plan that the school embodied would encounter obstacles in the years ahead and would be drastically altered. Incongruities between the community's vision of schools and the Kensington conception, the disharmony engendered by multiple sources of outside pressure on both Kensington and Milford, personnel changes, and policy changes within the district all seemed to indicate that Kensington would revert to the "old Milford type." At that time we charted our prediction, reproduced here in Figure 5.1.

Insert Figure 5.1 about here.

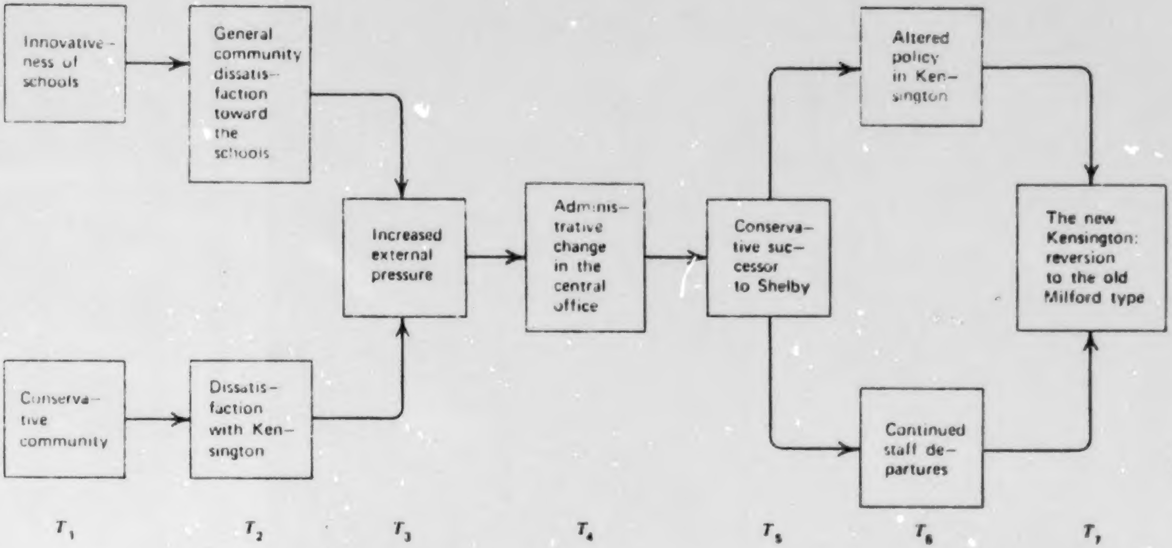
Innovativeness of schools
General community dissatisfaction toward the schools
Conservative community
Dissatisfaction with Kensington
Increased external pressure
Administrative change in the central office
Conservative successor to Shelby
Altered policy in Kensington
Continued staff departures
The new Kensington: reversion to the old Milford type
T_1
T_2
T_3
T_4
T_5
T_6
T_7

Figure 5.1: The Social Context of Kensington's Administrative Change (from Smith and Keith, 1971, p. 16)

Thus, from the outset, we anticipated change at Kensington. One of the lures of our undertaking was the opportunity to work towards a general paradigm or model of educational organizations and change in those organizations. Intensively observing a single organization at two widely dispersed points in time seemed like an excellent chance to identify parts and processes of such a model.

Abstraction of this sort has great appeal for social scientists. The power of unified conceptual schemes derived from empirical reality is demonstrated by such conceptions as Weber's bureaucracy (1947), Jahoda's analysis of positive mental health (1958), or by the centuries-long debate over the concept of liberal education (c.f. Becker, 1968; Bernstein, 1978; Nagel, 1961; Scriven, 1958; or Hirst, 1973; O'Conner, 1973; Struthers, 1971).

In education, attempts to form such unified theories have produced a host of models (e.g. Gowin, 1981; Charters & Jones, 1973; Smith & Geoffrey, 1968; Smith and Keith, 1971) that are useful and interesting for various purposes. But the paradigm that fits all schools and situations remains undiscovered; the "joints" at which one must cut to successfully dissect schools are yet to be found.

As our analysis of the Kensington story developed, we became less concerned with deductively arranging nomothetic propositions. Instead, we found ourselves identifying sensitizing concepts, ideas that developed from the immediate and practical world of teachers and principals, and superintendents and school boards. A number of these arose as we considered a simple finding of the study, an observation that was immediately apparent on our return to the school: today's Kensington is not the same organization we studied 15 years ago. This plain assertion leads us to an examination of organizational identity, a characteristic that we believe is important in a broader and more generalizable sense.

A Rose Is a Rose, or Is It?

Published accounts of public elementary schools rarely communicate that these organizations differ much from one another, that they have any special personality or idiosyncratic identity. Many schools do not even have their own name. For institutional purposes, labels like PS 177 appear to suffice. Others are named after nationally prominent figures: Washington, Jefferson, Lincoln, Roosevelt. In the latter instance, there may be no indication which Roosevelt and no one may care. A school, it seems, is just a school.

This was hardly the case when the new Kensington School first opened its doors. On the contrary, in the modest Milford community dotted with unpretentious schools, Kensington stood out like a sore thumb. It represented a special and unique blend of architecture, people, ideas, and pedagogy to all who knew the school and its purposes. Today, as described in the narrative, the original organization called Kensington has been altered dramatically. The following sections recount and examine the changes that have led to Kensington's current organizational identity.

The Building

We were somewhat surprised at the ease with which buildings could be changed--set in concrete or not. Modifications in Kensington's structure demonstrated that school buildings, like other parts of social systems, embody meanings. Alterations in the Kensington edifice reflected the ideas, values, and purposes of those individuals who came to hold authority in the system during the school's 15-year existence.

In Milford since 1966, and probably in most school districts, the community, the school board, and the superintendent have shared a conservative and traditional philosophy of education. (This generalization is fully discussed in Volume II of this report.) By this we mean that they were concerned with discipline, basic skills, and a recitation and textbook-based instructional style. In most instances, any variation in the school day would be permitted only when those modifications furthered traditional tenets of schooling. At the district level, this traditionalism included the beliefs that education should be cost effective, that programs at all schools in Milford should be uniform, and that available resources should be dispersed equitably among buildings. This conservative view of schooling intruded at Kensington, a building built to support a philosphy of openness, creativity, and individuality.

On our return to the school, some of the most obvious changes in the building included: the construction of a flimsy principal's office in the center of a large central area that was once the open administrative suite; the conversion of the open play shelter to lunchroom and gymnasium; the removal of the large aquarium; the additon of the vandal screens and barbed wire; the transformation of the audio-visual nerve center to a remedial reading classroom; and, of course, the erection of walls throughout the interior of the building.

Some of these changes appear to have been the result of poor planning on the part of Kensington's designers. The necessity of ringing the building roof with barbed wire, for example, might have been avoided by designing a building facade that did not entice students to climb to the roof. And the outdoor play shelter, now bricked in and serving as lunchroom and gymnasium, seems an improbable conception in a geographical area given to cold, wet, and windy winters. In an early planning meeting, the mere suggestion of a more conservative plan to construct a multi-use room rather than the covered play shelter met sarcastic resistance; the cry "multi-useless room" defeated the less flamboyant notion. It seems that practicality did not guide such decisions about Kensington's design. Instead, a vision--the new education as symbolized by this bold building--led the progenitors.

Other changes, however, resulted from Kensington's return to traditionalism, its return to the "old Milford type." Certainly, the removal of the aquarium, the conversion of the nerve center to a reading room, and the replacement of the perception core with the resource room made the building more similar to other Milford buildings. The construction of the enclosed principal office provided a place for private conferences with parents and obstreperous children in an era of tight discipline. Luxuries like the acting tower and rearview projection screen were simply abandoned, fragments of another era and a different vision. Lastly, more than any other change, the construction of walls throughout the building signaled the end of Spanman's vision. Their erection occurred during the transition of the school's student culture. The staff worried about how they would cope with their new charges. Their response was almost uniform: build walls, regain control. Principal Michael Edwards reluctantly bowed to those demands.

This Kensington response matched the district reaction to changing times and leadership. The board that came to power in 1966 and the superintendent selected by that board were staunchly conservative in their attitudes and beliefs about schooling. As these powerful individuals made decisions, the system of the Milford School District changed. The modification of the Kensington School was an important part of their plans. That importance seems underscored by the fact that Kensington's reconstruction was accomplished during years of difficulties with tax levies, tight budgets, and resource limitations.

The Past as Legacy

An aspect of the organization called Kensington that struck us in the original study was the liability of its newness. When the school opened its doors for the first time, it had no traditions, no set procedures, no history. In our first report on the school we stated:

> School personnel, probably like people in general, usually do not appreciate what it means to have a history. To possess a past is to have a social structure or "sets of alternative actions, or tendencies to act in certain ways . . . and the constraints that specify or limit these alternative actions. . . ." A major part of an origin of an organization centers on generating or building these sets of alternatives and the constraints that define them. (Smith & Keith, 1971, pp. 81-82)

The past as legacy, then, develops as people within an organization go about their business day-to-day, year-to-year. Traditions had developed at Kensington over time and many of these were important to the staff. The school Halloween party, for example, occurred each year and would probably continue to do so despite the present principal's reservations about its merit. More central to a school's formal mission are its standard operating procedures. Here, too, Kensington had accumulated its share.

By the time Principal Wales came on the scene, much of the Kensington faculty had worked together for a long time. They had struggled through periods of hardship in the absence of a strong leader. They had evolved their own ways and means. Part of Wales's success with the faculty stemmed from the way in which he fit into those established patterns.

Rather than disrupt the established Kensington operating procedures, Wales supported it and strengthened it. He provided a line of authority for the teachers that stretched right to the superintendent and board of education. The opening days of his administration proceeded smoothly because he followed the staff's lead. As we watched, we had the feeling that the school was virtually running itself. Thus, a sense of history can provide continuity for an organization, and that continuity can strengthen the organization's purpose--two valuable assets when sailing stormy straits.

There is another aspect of the past and its legacy: reputation. Deserved or otherwise, reputation accrues as an organization evolves, as agents and clients pass through it, and as persons tell, retell, and interpret events associated with the group. This aspect of an organization may not always be beneficial.

In Kensington's case, reputation developed from the notoriety the school achieved at its outset. For example, faculty members who had been at Kensington since its third year said that they still received remarks about the "favorite-son status" attributed to the original building and faculty, references to what many in the district had considered lavish and wasteful spending at the school. Apparently, some members of Milford's staff still carried a grudge.

Another faculty member related that she had decided to join the Kensington faculty only after an opportunity to teach at the school during a summer session had presented itself. Previously, she had been put off by the school's open, unstructured, anything-goes reputation. The summer job dispelled the myth for her and she happily transferred to the school shortly after. The point is that reputations linger and affect decisions and actions in organizations long after the bases for those reputations have dissipated. Part of a school, it seems, is what it once was.

This phenomenon occurred within the school as well. Michael Edwards, the school's second principal and the one who remained for ten years, became the standard by which subsequent Kensington principals were judged. Our records contain comments from central office staff indicating efforts to give succeeding principals a chance in the school: "Yes, Mr. Edwards was special, but . . . ." Similarly, teachers' perceptions of earlier students--their racial and economic composition, and academic performance--was the mark against which contemporary student groups at Kensington were measured. The past lingers in the present, sometimes making life more difficult for new actors in old settings.

Thus the past contributes to organizational identity. As an organization proceeds about its business, its past accrues. Some of it hangs on with surprising tenacity and potential to shape the future. If one were to take the entirely contemporaneous view that Lewin (1935) argued years ago, much of this contextual meaning of attitudes and expectations in organizations would be lost. Each belief in a setting tends to be couched in a series of particular stories that make up larger sagas.

Perhaps this view of the past is most important in an action or policy framework in which one can determine where an organization has been, where it is, and where it is most likely to go. As persuasion and consensus building seem to proceed most often in a historical context, knowledge of that context seems an important tool for any leader.

Stars, Heroes, and Troopers[1]

Organizational identity is a composite. We have discussed two parts thus far: Kensington's building and its past. Another major contributor to the school's identity was and continues to be its staff. Four principals, dozens of teachers and instructional specialists, and a bevy of secretaries, aides, nurses, cooks, and custodial staff have for 15 years strived to help children--each person in his or her own way. Sometimes their approaches differed markedly. Sometimes, as today, their attitudes toward working with children have been relatively uniform. Regardless of attitudinal differences, however, Kensington's organizational identity has always been shaped by its stars, heroes, and troopers.

Stars and Heroes. From the very beginning of our association with Kensington, we were struck with the ideological or cult-like quality of the organization. These terms apply to groups--religious or secular--with strong, if not excessive, devotion to an individual or ideal. That impression of the organization's past remains strong and has been developed into a major analytical theme in Volume V of this report.

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[1] To us, these terms connote several kinds of esteem. In an earlier draft, some of the participants saw the latter as pejorative. Another individual commented wryly and compared "stars" to shooting stars that blaze brightly for a brief moment before disappearing forever.

(Volume V recounts the life histories of members of the original Kensington faculty.)

Cults develop around strong, charismatic leaders--the group's stars or heroes. Spanman and Shelby were the leaders in the Kensington saga who moved Milford parents and the board to an emotional pitch that permitted the implementation of a radical educational innovation in a conservative community. Edwards was the revered, long-term principal of the school, the man whose name the school bears today. Although each was a prominent actor in the Kensington story, each is remembered differently, and the impact each man had on the organization differed greatly.

Spanman and Shelby were the stars in the Kensington story. Their role was large and dramatic for a short period of time. Today, however, Shelby is little remembered and rarely discussed at the school. Spanman's contributions are discussed but not felt. Reactions to Spanman in the central office varied from strongly negative ("the mess we were left with, including the ridiculous building, the Kensington School") to strongly positive ("the most exciting years in my . . . decades in the district"). The predominant memory, however, is one of ambivalence--admiration for his intellect and energy, and skepticism about his ideas and their relevance for a community like Milford.

The hero, of course, was Michael Edwards, principal of the school for ten years, remembered as the man who died in office, the man who never stopped trying to help his students and staff. Edwards's heroism in the collective memory of Kensington's staff did not result from total success, from achieving the ideals the school represented. In fact, he was the man who relented to the wishes of his staff and watched wall after wall built to divide the inner space of the school. He was admired, rather, for his mettle, his determination to keep trying. His most lasting contribution to Kensington was the memory of a better time at the school, a memory that sustains teachers today by providing a sense of direction and purpose.

Kensington's stars created the emotional fervor that characterized the school when we met the first faculty, but in retrospect, that pitch was short-lived. Edwards's leadership, on the other hand, sustained the school for a decade. The emotional character of the school changed with his guidance; true belief gave way to professional respect. With his passing, cults and ideologies at Kensington died, too.

Troopers. Leaders unquestionably influence the identities of organizations but, by virtue of numbers alone, staffs can also have significant impact on the idiosyncratic nature of organizations. When the staff consists of persons who perform their duties largely unobserved by administrators or by one another, its power to shape an organization grows. When, as in Kensington's case, strong leadership is absent for a period of time, we must look to the staff as a potent contributor to organizational identity.

The current Kensington staff comprises many experienced teachers, half of whom were hired by Michael Edwards in 1966. Another fourth of the staff joined the group during Edwards's tenure. This group of old hands is dispersed across grade levels at the school. Many of the teachers are good friends outside of the school context. Some taught for a time with Milford's superintendent at another elementary school. Several of this group carry informal administrative responsibilities at the school in addition to their regular classroom tasks. In our view, this was a formidable set of credentials that would allow an informal faculty social system to gain a great deal of influence over the course of an organization. It was an aspect of Kensington that an alert administrator needed to understand. As we indicated earlier, it was an aspect that Wales recognized and supported, rather than bucked.

One daily occurrence at the school provided a mechanism for the maintenance of the staff's collegiality and like-mindedness. That daily occurrence was the morning coffee klatch, when the faculty gathered in the staff lounge above the resource center. In the years we observed in the building, various arrangements were made by the teachers for sharing the cost and work of morning coffee. A refrigerator was added that permitted non-coffee drinkers to have milk, juice, and soda accessible.

A number of teachers regularly arrived early with their newspapers, handwork, or catalogues of clothing, crafts, or teaching materials. Some entered with students' assignments still to be graded, a task they accomplished casually over their morning drink and cake. But it was the quality of their conversation that made the time so special. Their chatter was folksy and familial. Sometimes they discussed "trouble" in the country, the state, or community as issues were triggered by the newspaper readers. Sometimes they laughed over a spouse or son or daughter who had done something ridiculous, or had won an award, or had been involved in an unusual event.

The majority of their conversations, though, centered on their students and their classrooms. From kindergarten to sixth grade, in regular class, music, or P.E., the foibles, the problems, the triumphs of these teachers with their students were exchanged in light banter. Frequently, one story spurred another as teachers listened and then added, "When I had him last year . . . ."

The significance of the morning coffee klatch was that it provided a time when the staff could gather, could share experiences that normally occurred behind closed doors, could add meaning to their lives through comparison and parable. This is the stuff from which community is ultimately built--shared experience with significant others that leads to the formation of norms and builds organizational identity.

The development and maintenance of this kind of community within an organization has many implications. The morning gatherers meld. The formation of such a group within a school faculty means that the members are no longer entirely individuals or an aggregate of individuals. They evolve group perspectives and procedures, as well as means to instruct newcomers to the organization and to sanction activities or attitudes. At their best, such groups can act as stabilizers in difficult times in schools (Metz, 1981). At their worst, they become significant barriers to creative change and innovation in educational organizations (Hargreaves, 1975).[2] In many schools, it is the one setting where "democracy" prevails.

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[2] Parenthetically, one of the motivations for the original study was a desire to see the genesis of a faculty peer group, a phenomenon we found important for Geoffrey in the Washington School (Smith & Geoffrey, 1968).

Gatherings such as the early morning coffee klatch--freely attended, without agenda, with open discussion, with people speaking their minds about the mundane and the significant--are social mechanisms of considerable importance. They are of vital interest for those who seek to understand, lead, or change schools, as well as for those who wish to build meaning into their day-to-day professional activities, careers, and personal lives.

One last reflection grows from the consideration of the teacher group at today's Kensington. The teachers' expressions and acts in many instances revealed an affinity for a reasonably identifiable cluster of beliefs, values, and customs that we associated with a rural way of life. This cultural aspect of the teacher group has changed over the years at Kensington and has variously meshed or conflicted with leader and student cultures.

We have charted this plurality of cultures at Kensington at three points in its history: a) Shelby's beginning year, 1964; b) the midst of Edwards's golden years, 1970; and c) the first year of Wales's tenure, 1979. (See Figure 5.2.) A comparison of the principals finds that their "culture"--the constellation of beliefs, values, and norms that they represent--differed in each instance.[3] We have described the first man

Insert Figure 5.2 about here.

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[3] Describing the "culture" of a single man as in the principal position of our chart, stretches the concept a good bit. Jay Jackson (1960) breaches this difficulty in the context of a group's normative structure as corresponding or non-corresponding normative structures.

Principal:	White Innovative	White Urban/Suburban Moderate	White Rural Conservative Localist
Teachers:	White Creative Innovative Cosmopolitan True Believers Lower Middle Class But Upwardly Mobile	White Traditional Conservative Localist Rural Origin Lower Middle Class	White Conservative Rural Traditional
Pupils and Their Families:	White Conservative Traditional Localist Lower Middle Class In Origin and Goals	White Traditional Conservative Localist	Majority Black Urban Transient Minority White Upper Lower to Lower Middle Class Traditional Conservative Localist Small Vietnamese Group
	1964	1970	1979

Figure 5.2: The Cultures of the Kensington School

as White, cosmopolitan, and innovative. Edwards, by comparison, was White, suburban, and moderate in his approach to education and educational change. Lastly, Wales is presented as White, rural, conservative, and local.

At the same three points, we found the first teachers to be predominantly White, innovative and creative, cosmopolitan and true believers. The second group was White, traditionalist, localist, and of rural origin. The second and third groups were similar (the same individuals made up more than half of each group), but they differed dramatically from the earliest group of teachers we encountered at the school.

Finally, the chart shows the student cultures at the school changing drastically over the 15 years. At the first point, students represented a White, conservative, localist, lower middle class population. At the second point, they appeared much the same: White, conservative, localist, and lower middle class. But by the beginning of Wales's tenure, the majority of the student group were Black, urban, and transient. One distinct minority in the school was comprised of White, conservative, upper lower class and lower middle class students. Another very small but distinct group was comprised of Asian children, recently arrived Vietnamese.

The point of drawing these comparisons is to note that congruency between leader, teacher, and student cultures existed only in Edwards's era. The greatest incongruency among groups has occurred most recently and those differences are increasing. It seems that this cultural plurality greatly complicates the task of educating Kensington's youngsters. We commented at one point on the distinctly different languages used at the school on our return: a Black student dialect that teachers found difficult to comprehend; a rural White idiom that could be confusing to untuned urban and Asian ears; and Vietnamese--no adult in the school had any understanding of the language or the culture. This problem, and we believe it is a significant problem for educators, transcends Kensington's boundaries. For example, in a recent study of principals' activities (Dwyer _et al_, 1982) one school was encountered in which 16 languages and 26 dialects were spoken as primary languages by families within the student group. The problem at Kensington, then, pales by comparison. But the dilemma of cultural and linguistic pluralities in schools remains an enigma for educators who work opposite sides of these barriers from their students--particularly in a period when basics are being stressed and the teaching of "standard English" is a common and primary objective of instruction in many schools.

In sum, organizational identity is greatly affected by those who participate in organizations. At Kensington, the stars, heroes, and troopers all made their contributions over the years as they interacted among themselves and with their students. In the long run at Kensington, it seems that it was the long-term staff members who contributed the most to Kensington's nature and who were responsible for what continuity there has been in that setting.

The Instructional Program

Perhaps the least distinctive portion of Kensington's organizational identity, today, is its instructional program. Reviewing our notes on classrooms and the activities within them stirred memories of other elementary schools in which we had worked, particularly of the Washington Elementary School, an unremarkable inner-city school. This very fact, however, is extraordinary from the perspective of change; in 15 years Kensington's innovative instructional program did return to the "old Milford type," the antithesis of what the school was to represent.

A chart, created by Principal Shelby early in the school's history, was designed to illustrate what Kensington was to accomplish. That same chart, reproduced as Figure 5.3, ironically captures the school's programmatic reversal. Originally, it listed a series of from-to statements.

Insert Figure 5.3 about here.

Today, a reversal of the "from" and the "to" columns accurately portrays the school's steady drift over the years.

We labored in the narrative to portray the staff's perceptions of a changing student body--lower ability students; less interested students; children of broken and transient homes; children with less respect for authority and with little self-control--of changing economic and political climates, of faltering leadership at the school, and of the reemergence of the community's fundamental conservatism to explain the direction of the school's pedagogical U-turn. In the remainder of this section we wish to comment further on some of the changes we found.

The Shift in Goals and Objectives. "I'll try to get you ready for junior high." This comment, expressed by a sixth-grade teacher addressing his students on the first day of school, aptly represented the more immediate, practical, "realistic" goal held for students by Kensington's current faculty. Talk of developing "fully functioning Freddy" is completely gone.

From	To
Passive, reactive pupils	Active, initiating pupils
Pupil followership	Pupil leadership
Restriction of pupils	Freedom for pupils
External discipline	Self-discipline
External motivation	Self-motivation
Group activities	Individual activities
Restricting pupil interaction	Encouraging pupil interaction
Teacher responsibility for teaching	Pupil responsibility for learning
Teacher planning	Teacher-pupil planning
Teacher evaluation	Teacher-pupil evaluation
Teacher as a dispenser of knowledge	Teacher as catalyst for inquiry
Teacher as controller of pupils	Teacher as organizer for learning
Identical roles for teachers	Differentiated roles for teachers
Closed, rigid social climate	Open, flexible social climate

Figure 5.3: The Institutional Plan's Redefinition of Teacher Pupil Roles (from Smith and Keith, 1971, p. 39)

This narrower conception of schooling--getting the student ready for the next grade level--assumes a rational, hierarchical arrangement of distinct bits of knowledge that can be progressively imparted to students as they wind their way through the K-12 organizational structure of schools. This frees a teacher from feeling solely responsible for students' development since he or she is only one cog in a complex, multi-level education system. Within this arrangement, the integration of acquired skills and knowledge is largely left to the student. It is an opposing view to the holistic vision that guided Spanman, Shelby, and the original faculty. Dewey (1916) represented the debate as opposing views of childhood. The current Kensington staff would see childhood as a readiness phase for adulthood. The original faculty would tend to view childhood as a convenient nomenclature for one portion of the continuous experience of life. The purpose of schooling varies between these views. For the first, school is a mechanism for preparation, for doing something in the remote future. In the latter, schools exist to provide places for children to perform their life's work, experiencing.

The Shifts in Staff Organization and Specialization. In 1964 when Kensington received its first students, the staff was organized differently from most schools. Grades one and two were lumped into the Basic Skills Division, and four, five, and six constituted the Independent Study Division. Three teachers shared the third-grade students in a program called Transition that readied students for the independent and individualized program they would begin the following year. Grade levels were not emphasized in this arrangement. Instead, the plan called for students to master skills at their own rate, independent of their age and of the rate of their cohorts. In the Basic Skills Program and Transition, teachers tended to function in similar ways and were each responsible for a variety of instructional contents. In the Independent Study Division, on the other hand, teachers functioned as subject matter specialists and met with students as the students required their services. In all divisions the teaching staff was bolstered by numerous aides who were needed to monitor the independent progress of students.

Today, that organization has shifted to a traditional self-contained classroom pattern. The special needs of students are serviced by a number of remedial specialists who operate on a pullout basis, i.e., students are removed from their regular classes for brief periods of specialized instruction. In the classrooms of older students, some informal departmentalizing occurs; one teacher offers all the science, another offers math instruction, or social studies, and so forth.

On our return, it was the complex program of remediation that was most strikingly different. Learning-disability classes, remedial reading, speech therapy, individual and group counseling with parents and students, and special language classes for the few Vietnamese children who attended the school competed for time, space, and resources. Public Law 94-142 was responsible for much of this proliferation, and the district and county had added their own special education initiatives.

Classroom teachers fretted over the trade-off between the benefits of these services for individual students and the disruptions the programs engendered for regular classroom instruction. The principal openly admitted that the necessary coordination required to gain the maximum benefit of the multiple programs was too complex for him to develop an organized plan. Instead, teachers bargained their priorities with one another in the fairest and most meaningful way they could. Too, Dr. Wales placed a great deal of faith in the classroom teacher's ability to adapt to the special needs of his or her students. He worried over the time students spent outside those homeroom environments. His skepticism affected the teachers and frustrated some of the specialists.

In our earlier analysis of Kensington's efforts at team teaching, we raised a number of thorny issues, offering them as points of departure for further research. We reiterate those here, in the belief that they actually address broader schooling issues, and that they deserve serious consideration in any schooling situation where coordination, decision making, resource allocation, and specialization are at issue.

> 1. Teaming requires the most sophisticated form of interdependence, what Thompson (1967) calls reciprocal, and the most difficult kind of coordination, mutual adjustment. This coordination is very time-consuming and expensive in communication and decision making. Organizations and individuals with limited resources (time and energy) must divert them from other activities, for example, on occasion productive effort such as teaching, itself.
>
> 2. As various hierarchical levels of decision making are introduced (for example, teaming), decision-making freedom at the lowest level (teacher-pupil) is constrained. For those who speak of "democracy" in the classroom, teaming raises serious incompatibilities.
>
> 3. Unless individual skills are unique in kind or highly developed in degree, teaming as reciprocal interdependence will be higher in cost than it is productive of benefits.
>
> 4. As teams increase in size, from two to more than two, for example, seven, these effects are magnified.
>
> 5. Because of faddism and emotionalism instead of analysis in professional education, the new elementary education

> that offers team teaching to the practitioner contains mutual incompatible elements leading to latent and unanticipated negative consequences--dysfunctions. (Smith & Keith, 1971, p. 234)

Shifts in Instructional Materials. It was immediately apparent on our return that instructional materials had changed, too. Fishing poles had given way to textbooks that kids could call their very own and ditto sheets, lots and lots of ditto sheets.

The transition to textbooks began in Edwards's era, and teachers reported that the change was readily accepted by the students.[4] A first impression on the first day of school in 1979 was that the textbooks provided continuity in the instructional program from grade to grade; despite new teachers and classrooms, students began their work with little hesitation and few questions or comments.

When teachers agree with the scope, content, and sequence of activities in textbooks, and when the texts match the ability level of the students using them, presumably results can be very positive. Today's Kensington staff, however, commented on several occasions that these conditions were not always congruent, yet the adoption of the text series preempted much of their prerogative to make adjustments.

In brief, the use of textbooks has a host of consequences. Some seem instructionally beneficial and others seem problemmatic. In an earlier analysis of a textbook-based instructional program, we commented on a number of these consequences. That same analysis is relevant to Kensington and is included here as Figure 5.4.

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[4] The process of textbook adoption is complex in the Milford district. Volume II of this report contains extended illustrations of that process.

Insert Figure 5.4 about here.

One way in which Kensington's staff was able to modify or supplement the school's textbook program was through the use of ditto work sheets. As described in the last chapter, this type of seat work was ubiquitous at the school. Teachers listed the following reasons for their pervasive utilization:

1. Need for repetition in the practice of basic skills;
2. Need for a way to occupy students while working with individuals or other groups;
3. Relative inexpense of materials;
4. Availability and ease of production;
5. Congruence with back-to-basic mode of instruction; and
6. Classroom control.

The staff did not address potentially negative consequences such as student boredom, incompatibility with textbook objectives, or students' inability to relate these discrete activities to larger learning objectives.

Like the return to partitioned classrooms, the progressive use of texts and dittos at Kensington seemed another response to the staff's need for control, their perception of the needs of the new student body, and influence from the back-to-basics surge in schools. In addition, the district's renewed conservative thrust and economic difficulties gave momentum to the instructional shift. These themes emerge again and again as we think about the change in Kensington's organizational identity.

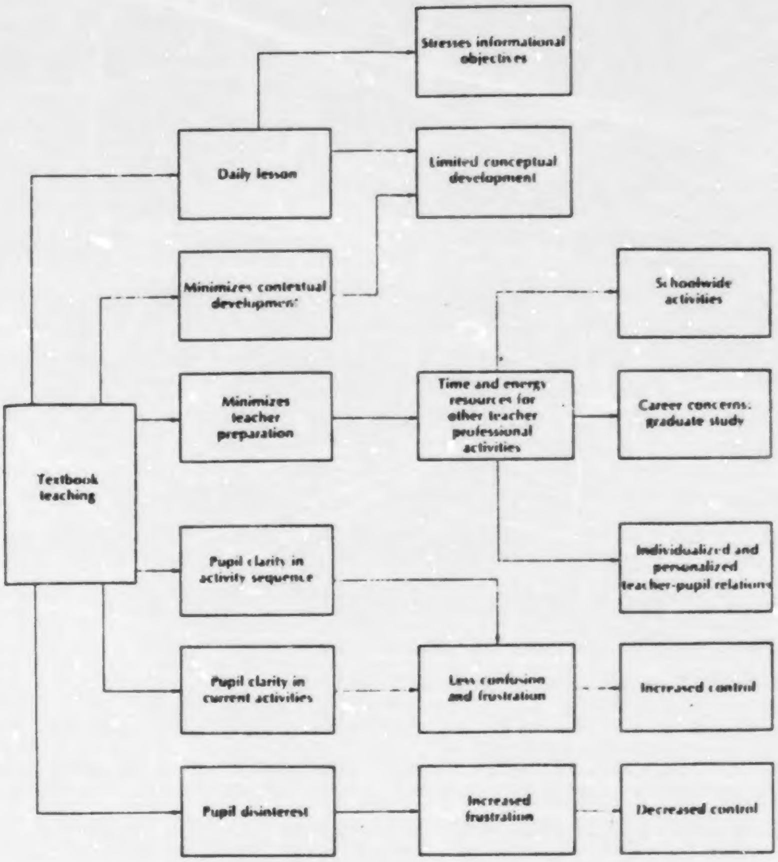
Stresses informational objectives
Daily lesson
Limited conceptual development
Minimizes contextual development
Schoolwide activities
Minimizes teacher preparation
Time and energy resources for other teacher professional activities
Career concerns: graduate study
Textbook teaching
Individualized and personalized teacher-pupil relations
Pupil clarity in activity sequence
Pupil clarity in current activities
Less confusion and frustration
Increased control
Pupil disinterest
Increased frustration
Decreased control

Figure 5.4: Impact of Textbook Teaching on Aspects of Classroom and School Social Structure and Processes (From Smith and Geoffrey, 1968, p. 183)

Facades and Realities: "What You See Is What You Get"

This cliche summarizes for us much of our feeling about today's Kensington Elementary School. It also captures another important way in which the school has changed and one final part of organizational identity.

In 1964 we suggested that different realities existed at Kensington and we discussed them in terms of facades, doctrines, and day-to-day activities.[5] In commonsense language, we were trying to distinguish among what was talked about, what existed in writing, and what occurred in the behavioral and social realm at Kensington. Our point was that there were substantial gaps among these versions of reality and that those gaps had both anticipated and unanticipated consequences for the early Kensington.

As our heading suggests, these gaps have narrowed at today's Kensington to the point of being nonexistent. In general this convergence seems desirable. The complex task of educating children seems easier when the multiple groups that participate in the enterprise speak the same language and share a common knowledge about events in the school.

The convergence of realities is particularly useful when an organization's goal is stability and when the system is nearing some form of equilibrium. When change is desired or new visions are pursued, however, differing realities may serve a purpose. The innovator can argue that the system has greater potential and is not living up to its aspirations.

---

[5] "Reality" even when used in quotations carries implications of the sort suggested by *Roshomon* (Kurosawa, 1969) and *Alexandria Quartet* (Durrell, 1960). For the moment, we would define reality as that part of the social world about which substantial intersubjective agreement exists among observers and participants.

In this sense we recall a familiar line from Browning that was popular around Kensington in its earliest days: "A man's reach should exceed his grasp or what's a heaven for?" Comparing this passage to the "what-you-see-is-what-you-get" cliche, crystallizes the differences in Kensington's organizational identity in 1964 and in 1979.

Conclusion

We have compared and contrasted the organizational identity of Kensington in 1964 and Kensington in 1979. We have suggested that the physical structure that houses an organization is a significant aspect of its identity; the design and ultimate uses of a structure may embody an organization's values and goals. We have suggested that an organization's past is carried on through reputation and evolved operating procedures, and that this history affects the present. We discussed the importance of individuals in organizations and their impact on organizational identity. Our conclusion was that those individuals who remain the longest and attend to the more routine details of a group's work may have the greatest influence on the group's identity. We further discussed a shift in the nature of Kensington's work, in both process and content, and how that shift made the organization distinctly different from what it once had been. Finally, we commented on the convergence of realities at today's Kensington that has also contributed to the school's identity.

As we have described above, the Kensington envisioned by Spanman and Shelby is gone. For better or for worse, Kensington is now an average school, only one of many in the Milford District. Beyond depicting the specific story of Kensington, we have used the concept of organizational identity as a demonstration of one way in which to examine organizations over time. The two profiles we created of this organization at two distinct points in its history illustrate the dramatic changes brought about by the interaction of population, economic, and ideological shifts within an increasingly complex and expanding education system.

CHAPTER 6

IMPLICATIONS FOR THOUGHT AND PRACTICE

In this final chapter we examine the findings of our return to Kensington. We offer several points that we believe are important to those who study change in schools or other complex organizations and to those who seek to guide public schools within the contemporary context of schooling. The first section explains the concept "longitudinal nested systems," the perspective it entails, and its use. The second section illustrates the multiple and often conflicting forces involved in the determination of educational policy in this country and comments on the school principal, the person who must implement school policy.

Longitudinal Nested Systems

In our first look at the Kensington School in 1964, we focused primarily on the school itself, limiting our comments about innovation and change to people and events connected directly with the school. Analysis of the community, parents, and district administrators proceeded almost entirely from observations at the school or in meetings that intimately concerned the setting.

On our return we found that this school and classroom perspective was insufficient to explain how Kensington had changed. Any issue we examined--such as administrative succession, discipline, curriculum, or racial change--carried us into ever wider circles of inquiry, and forced us to examine factors of systems that at first appeared extraneous but, in fact, were exogenous. Our notion of longitudinal nested systems is an effort to come to grips with the role that these interdependent systems played in Kensington's metamorphosis.

The multiple categories of antecedents for the changes at Kensington most naturally fell along geographical, political, and organizational lines: international, national, state, county, community, district, and school. Portraying these systems as nested captured their interrelatedness. Adding the time dimension to our conception illustrated their dynamic quality. This basic model is contained in Figure 6.1. This captured the spread of the nested systems. The narrative indicates that we found much of the interaction between the systems to be typified by conflict, politics, and legal constraints. Each theme and strand we pursued developed as an amalgam of these multiple systems. Those events that represented intentional, creative innovations and alternatives were soon entangled in other kinds of change growing out of personal and political interests, activities of other organizations, and forces that emanated from larger systems.

Insert Figure 6.1 about here.

Placing the systems we found relevant to Kensington's story on the vertical axis began Figure 6.2. Some of those systems predated Kensington. To allow their inclusion, we chose 1910, the year official records of the Milford School District began, as the first point on the horizontal time line in the figure. As we found exogenous variables in Kensington's origin and change, we arranged them in the grid to demonstrate their temporal relationships. We contend that each act of this nature

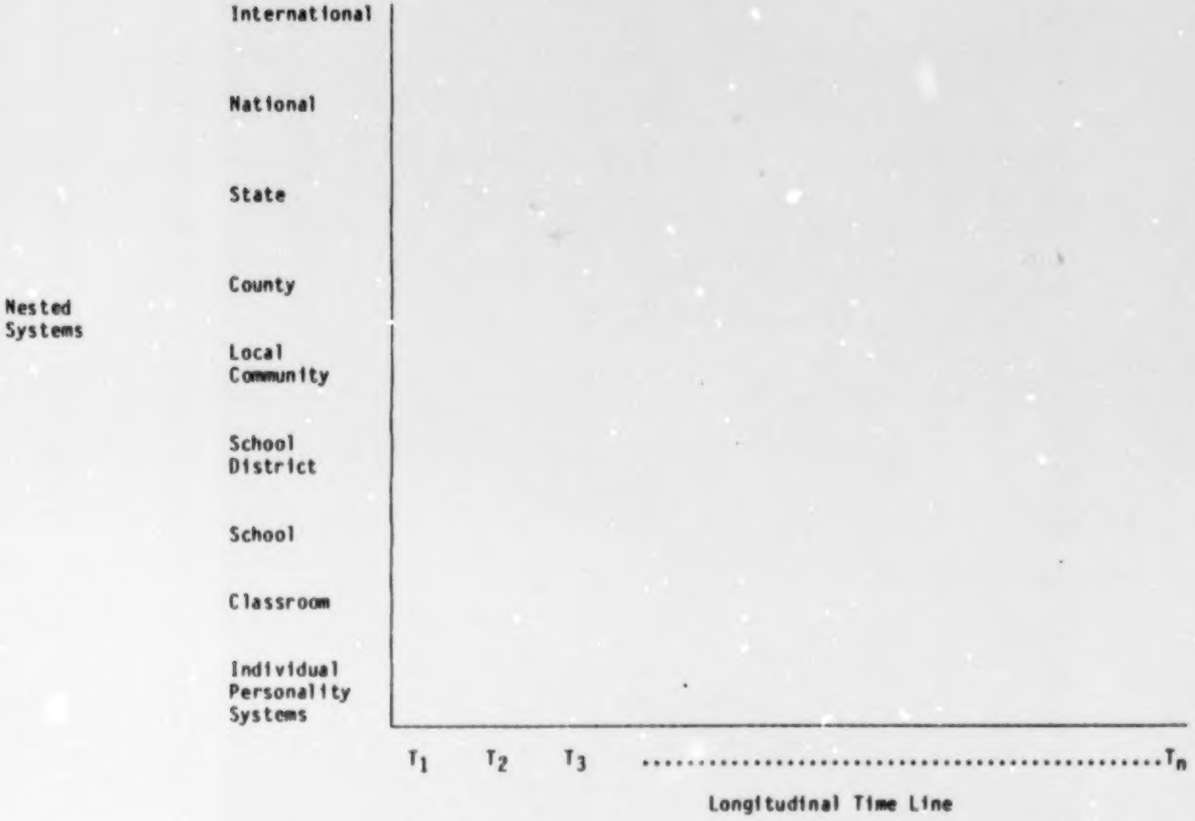

Figure 6.1 The Longitudinal Nested Systems Model

added clarity and depth to the Kensington story and improved our ability to think about our original problem: what happened at Kensington?

Insert Figure 6.2 about here.

The process not only has been enlightening in this respect but also has expanded the initial conceptualization of the study by suggesting further fruitful avenues of inquiry. For example, as we view the Milford District story as an important influence on Kensington events, that story becomes significant in its own right. We found that in order to understand how Kensington changed, we had to answer the question: why did the Kensington School appear at all in the Milford School District? A further look at one of the themes in our narrative, the significance of racial change at Kensington, illustrates our model in use.

One of the most dramatic changes in the Kensington School involved a series of nested national, state, and local events. As we indicated, education of students in Midwest State was legally segregated by race until 1954 when the Brown versus Topeka Supreme Court decision was handed down. A ruling by Midwest State and a decision by the Milford Board of Education followed the landmark court decision. The district's reaction was phrased quite explicitly as noted in the Milford School Community Bulletin:

> SEGREGATION TO END IN MILFORD SCHOOLS SEPTEMBER 1, 1955
>
> After a ruling from the Midwest State Attorney General and a ruling from the State Department of Education at Capitol City, the Board of Education of the School District of Milford has decided that segregation in the Milford School District will end on September 1, 1955. The status of our schools will remain the same as in the past until September 1, 1955. (Doc., 1954) (emphasis ours)

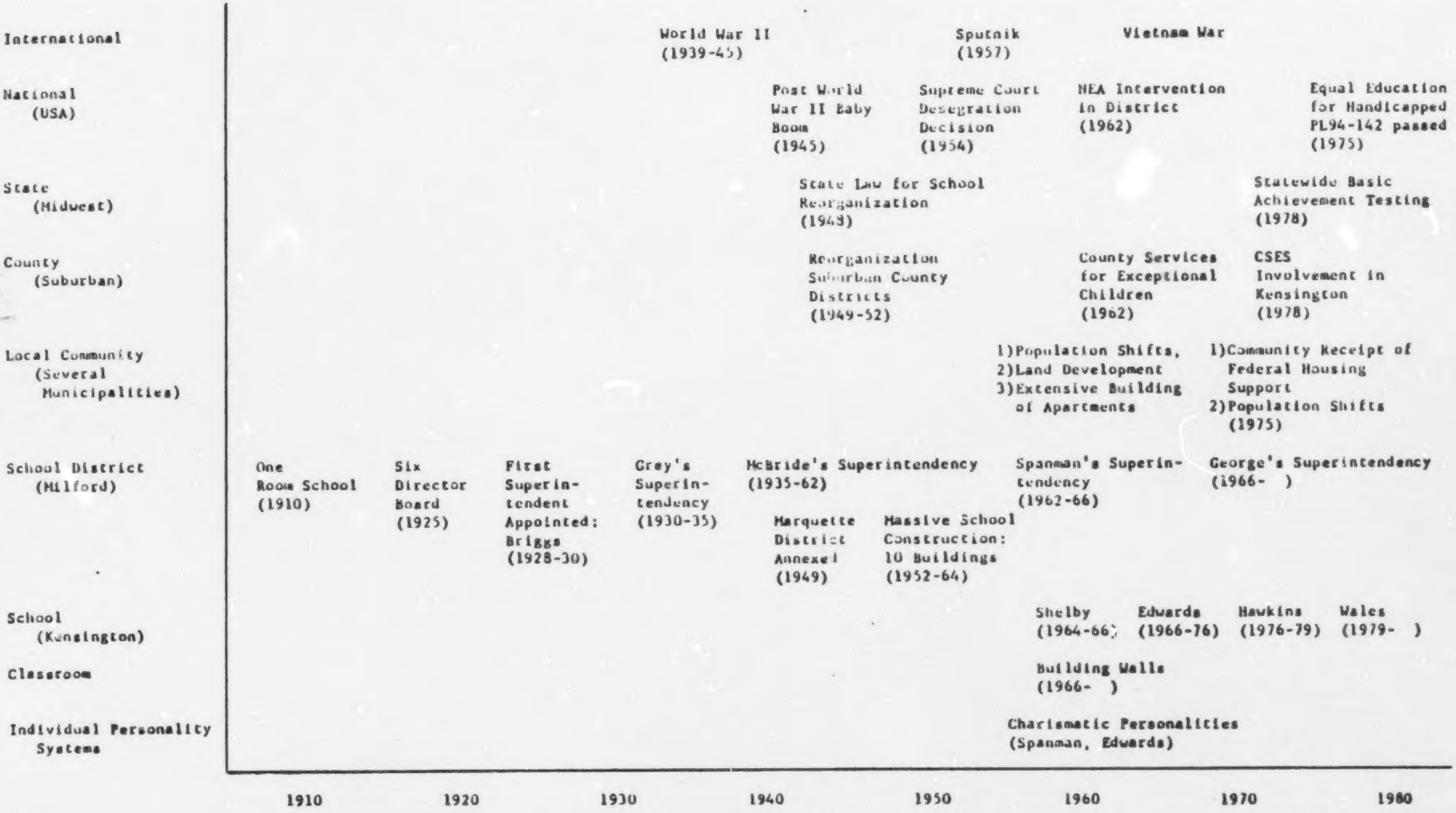
International
National (USA)
State (Midwest)
County (Suburban)
Local Community (Several Municipalities)
School District (Milford)
School (Kensington)
Classroom
Individual Personality Systems
World War II (1939-45)
Sputnik (1957)
Vietnam War
Post World War II Baby Boom (1945)
Supreme Court Desegration Decision (1954)
NEA Intervention in District (1962)
Equal Education for Handicapped PL94-142 passed (1975)
State Law for School Reorganization (1948)
Statewide Basic Achievement Testing (1978)
Reorganization Suburban County Districts (1949-52)
County Services for Exceptional Children (1962)
CSES Involvement in Kensington (1978)
1)Population Shifts, 2)Land Development 3)Extensive Building of Apartments
1)Community Receipt of Federal Housing Support 2)Population Shifts (1975)
One Room School (1910)
Six Director Board (1925)
First Superintendent Appointed: Briggs (1928-30)
Grey's Superintendency (1930-35)
McBride's Superintendency (1935-62)
Marquette District Annexed (1949)
Massive School Construction: 10 Buildings (1952-64)
Spanman's Superintendency (1962-66)
George's Superintendency (1966-)
Shelby (1964-66)
Edwards (1966-76)
Hawkins (1976-79)
Wales (1979-)
Building Walls (1966-)
Charismatic Personalities (Spanman, Edwards)
1910
1920
1930
1940
1950
1960
1970
1980

Figure 6.2 Selected Events and School Personnel Arrayed on The Longitudinal Nested Systems Model

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In a larger sense, the court decision, multiple interrelated events in the deteriorating Metropolitan City, problems in federally subsidized housing, and public attitudes toward education (especially a professed desire for neighborhood schools) led to the large population shifts in Milford during the mid 1970's.[1] These factors, in turn, led to the shift in the number of non-Caucasian students at the Kensington School from a tiny minority to a 60% majority. The cultural, social, and educational impact of that alteration was dramatic, as described in our narratives.

We find a host of observations relevant to these nested events: a) The Milford community is segregated into predominantly White neighborhoods and predominantly Black neighborhoods. A few integrated pockets of housing have emerged. b) Over the years, there have been several instances of school boundary changes in the district to balance pupil numbers. Despite those changes, one set of schools in the district remains mostly White, while others are 60-95% Black. c) There has never been a Black on the Milford Board of Education. In a recent election two Blacks ran for the board but were overwhelmingly defeated. d) There is only one Black administrator, an assistant principal, in the district. e) During the 1979-80 school year, two Black staff members, a counselor and a teacher worked at Kensington. The teacher was moved to another school the following year because of declining enrollments at the school. f) District policy has consistently supported a neighborhood school concept. g) Kensington staff responded to the changing student population by adding more walls, by turning to more traditional curriculum and instructional styles, and with tighter discipline. h) Regarding the variety of emotional responses to changes in racial composition, one commentator described Kensington positively as "sunkissed, a change for the better." The feeling of another was expressed with an analogy to Kubler-Ross's (1969) analysis of death and dying: "Kensington went through stages of denial, anger, bargaining, depression, acceptance and hope."

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[1] Similarly, the postwar baby boom, new housing, and jobs in decentralized industry contributed to the expansion of the Milford District from three schools to fourteen between 1950 and 1964.

We find these to be powerful statements about race relations, schools, and the effectiveness of state and federal integration policies in Milford. State and federal integration initiatives have been largely ineffective in the face of local housing patterns, district policies regarding school organization and staff assignments, and attitudes of locally elected board members and their constituencies.

These antecedents to changes at Kensington are only a few of many examples. As described in the narrative, other factors such as inflation, PL 94-142, the "back-to-basics" movement, state guidelines, and local concerns over discipline were influential forces. One further illustration demonstrates the consequences of this tangle of exogenous variables at Kensington.

Some of the very earliest items in the district board minutes recorded actions taken regarding pupil misbehavior. Concerns over corporal punishment occurred early and the board articulated a "no corporal punishment policy" in 1925. Instead, they created a policy for school suspensions and board hearings in serious cases of misbehavior. Over the years, that policy has been modified as new members and attitudes about discipline changed. The district continues to wrestle with this perennial problem.

Modifications of the Kensington policy regarding pupil misbehavior were frequent. Initially, the policy as articulated by Shelby in his list of goals, was an attempt to move from external discipline, external motivation, restriction of pupil interaction, and the idea of teacher as policeman toward self-discipline, self-motivation, and encouragement of pupil interaction. The primary responsibility of teachers was to organize student learning experiences. As we noted, Dr. George's initial mandate from the board and his own predispositions and attitudes about student discipline converged to bring tight discipline back to the forefront of teacher and principal responsibility. Control was perceived as a necessary condition for pupil learning. The movement towards tighter discipline at Kensington is evident in the comparison of the activities and styles of Edwards, Hawkins, and Wales.

In the spring of 1980, we found this continuing concern over discipline expressed by the institution of paddling, detention, and suspension at Kensington. All of these were strongly supported by the staff, principal, and central office. Discipline had even been a significant issue in the recent board elections as described in a news story:

> He said he had focused most of his campaign on quality education and discipline within the school system. "I just believe in discipline," he said. "I think there has to be a re-emphasis on discipline in order to keep quality education."
> (Doc., 1980)

The incumbent in that race was re-elected by a wide margin. While a number of other issues were critical in the election, discipline was important. There was, in this period of Kensington's history, a convergence of opinion about discipline throughout classrooms, schools, administrators, board officials, and community members.

Differences in discipline policies and student population at the school were two of the differences most obvious at Kensington between the times of our studies. Again we believe Figure 6.2 helps represent and order these and many other changes. Figure 6.3 carries the process one step further and shows the accumulating effects of changes in the most distal of Kensington's nested systems as they flow to the community, the district, the school, and the classroom.

Insert Figure 6.3 about here.

In effect, we are back to Figure 5.1 and the prediction from 15 years ago that Kensington would revert to the old Milford type. The figure demonstrates that Kensington changed and that its reversion was vastly more complicated than our labels might suggest.

Events in the larger systems in which Kensington is nested have their own integrity and dynamic. For example, the 1954 Brown decision was a major turning point. Consequences of that event have been felt at the school and classroom level only in the past five years. Further, these effects are interactive and linear. Demographic changes, for example, are tangled with perceptual changes; together they have affected curriculum and instruction at the school.

With the sense of history derived from our nested and longitudinal view of events at Kensington and Milford, we are tempted to venture a further prediction. The district has a record of naivete about compliance and familiarity with regulations that goes back all the way to Mrs. Briggs, its first superintendent. She failed to establish a high school because

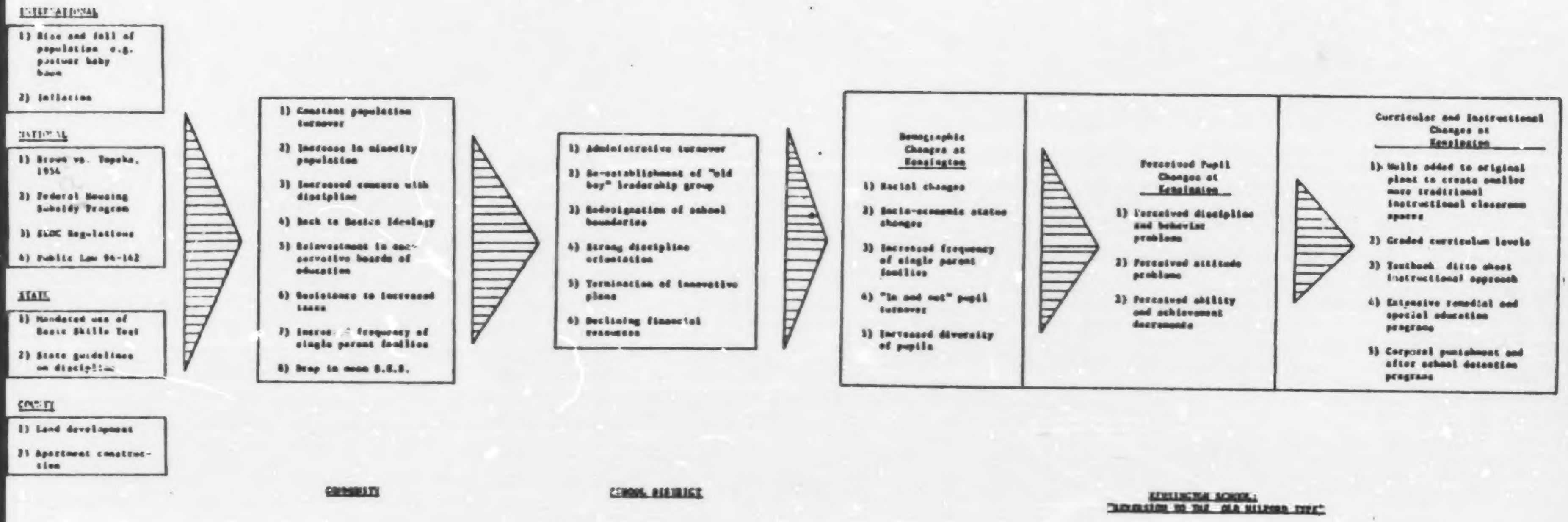
INTERNATIONAL
1) Rise and fall of population e.g. postwar baby boom
2) Inflation
NATIONAL
1) Brown vs. Topeka, 1954
2) Federal Housing Subsidy Program
3) EEOC Regulations
4) Public Law 94-142
STATE
1) Mandated use of Basic Skills Test
2) State guidelines on discipline
COUNTY
1) Land development
2) Apartment construction
1) Constant population turnover
2) Increase in minority population
3) Increased concern with discipline
4) Back to Basics Ideology
5) Reinvestment in conservative boards of education
6) Resistance to increased taxes
7) Increased frequency of single parent families
8) Drop in mean S.E.S.
COMMUNITY
1) Administrative turnover
2) Re-establishment of "old boy" leadership group
3) Redesignation of school boundaries
4) Strong discipline orientation
5) Termination of innovative plans
6) Declining financial resources
SCHOOL DISTRICT
Demographic Changes at Kensington
1) Racial changes
2) Socio-economic status changes
3) Increased frequency of single parent families
4) "In and out" pupil turnover
5) Increased diversity of pupils
Perceived Pupil Changes at Kensington
1) Perceived discipline and behavior problems
2) Perceived attitude problems
3) Perceived ability and achievement decrements
Curricular and Instructional Changes at Kensington
1) Walls added to original plant to create smaller more traditional instructional classroom spaces
2) Graded curriculum levels
3) Textbook ditto sheet instructional approach
4) Extensive remedial and special education programs
5) Corporal punishment and after school detention programs
KENSINGTON SCHOOL:
"REVERSION TO THE OLD MILFORD TYPE"

Figure 6.3 A Longitudinal Nested Systems Portrayal of the Changes in the Kensington School

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she was not aware of or did not understand state regulations. She encountered difficulties, too, when a tax levy was rescinded because it was not consistent with state rules.

This type of limited understanding of state and federal regulations continues, and according to most staff, its effect is compounded by the a determination to set policy by local standards. The district's gradually increasing involvement in federal programs and its acceptance of state and federal revenues ensnares it in new regulations concerning civil rights for women, the handicapped, and racial minorities. Its failure to comply with these requirements has placed the community, the board, and the administration on a collision course with government authorities. These problems are compounded as local, state, and national politicians focus on busing of students, placement of low income housing, and allocation of federal funds. These officials offer varied views and mixed messages to the public. Perhaps we will have another opportunity to return to Milford to investigate this "collision" hypothesis. The next Kensington story may be the tale of a district in court, or of the conflicts engendered by community, state, and federal controls over education.

Broader Implications of the Model

Not a Theory of Change. We emphasize that the longitudinal nested systems model is not a theory of change or innovation in itself. It is a tool of inquiry and analysis. It offers a structure that helps us think through our data and a format in which our data can be arranged for analysis. This perspective has implications for both the meta-theoretical and the theoretical levels of analysis. For example, it argues implicitly for a contextualist root metaphor rather than a formistic, mechanistic, or organic one (Pepper, 1942; Sarbin, 1977). Theoretically, it seems open to varied substantive theories, for example, organizational, political, or cultural. In this regard, as the Kensington and Milford stories unfolded and the longitudinal nested systems model arose, the model promoted important understanding of another set of ideas that was only dimly perceived in the initial proposal. A competing theories notion struck us as fruitful for future study. What would result if we attempted to compare, to contrast, even to synthesize or extend various theories of change in light of the model? Visions of recent attempts at synthesis by House (1979) on innovation theory and Allison (1971) on policy theory danced through our heads. That agenda both entices and overwhelms us. For now we are satisfied to speculate about these possibilities.

Further, the model helps locate our approach in relation to other social science studies of change and innovation in education.[2] First, we find ourselves examining increasingly long periods of time for relevant information in our inquiries. This differs from the snap shot variety of study that examines a brief, specific period. Second, our perspective involves a holistic view of events; we contend that one cannot understand an innovation or change in a system without considering the larger systems of which it is part. Third, our model makes explicit a hierarchical arrangement among the nested systems. It highlights the direct and indirect controls that one system may impose on another. Fourth, the longitudinal nested systems notion allows one to focus on restraints or givens of a field of action set by one system upon another. Fifth, it assumes some autonomy both analytically and practically for each system, perhaps less than some educational theorists imply and more than some educational practitioners perceive. Sixth, it builds upon a psychology of individual actors, involved in events or scenes, that culminates in meaningful structures resembling plots in drama and literature (Kelly, 1955, and Sarbin, 1977). Seventh, it includes a respect for the chance event, the fortuitous, the serendipitous that nature forces upon us in the form of illness, death, luck, or natural disaster. Finally, our conception is aligned closely with the perspective of some historians. Yet, we differ from them, too. Our longitudinal approach carries the time line to the present, the realm of contemporary events.

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[2] Our investigation, Federal Policy in Action: A Case Study of an Urban Education Project (Smith and Dwyer, 1980) is a history and analysis as well. It anticipates many of these ideas.

Our orientation pushes us in the direction of storytelling as an important tool in explanations of change and innovation. Yet, we cannot abandon the value of more abstract, conceptual forms of analysis. Thus we become involved in a debate commonly waged among historians, that is, how best to contribute to cumulative knowledge. Hexter (1971) described this discussion as "storytelling" versus "scientific explanation":

> Historical stories are quite unlike scientific explanation sketches. The latter are thin; they have to be filled out with missing words and sentences formulating the missing implied laws and boundary conditions. But although historical stories omit a good many laws and conditions, too, and although some laws are rather hard to find even when one looks for them, those stories are not thin; by scientific standards they are often fat, egregiously obese, stuffed with unessential words quite useless for the purpose of adequate and satisfactory explanation. (Hexter, 1971, p. 151)

Although the longitudinal nested systems model will not resolve this debate, it keeps us moving by providing a working solution to, if not a compromise between, "storytelling" and "scientific explanation." It provides a means to begin the integration of more abstract concepts and theoretical generalizations into meaningful ways to think about innovation and change in education.

More generally, though tentatively, we feel that our model may aid the discussion of the place of values in educational thought (O'Conner, 1973; Hirst, 1973; Struthers, 1971). We believe that debate is at the heart of what is sometimes called practical reasoning (Schwab, 1978; Reid, 1978; Smith, in process). We believe one's viewpoint about the role of values in inquiry and policy making has major consequences for the models that one builds in education and the practical decisions that one makes. We would argue, for example, that the values of decision makers in the Milford district strongly influenced the course of Kensington.

We would argue, too, that a sense of a school's or a district's history could be an aid in examining approaches to curriculum, teaching, discipline, or other continuing dilemmas. In that light, our model provides input for patrons, parents, pupils, teachers, administrators, or board members who are searching for solutions to persistent problems. We believe that educational research and theory must deal with the questions of values and should assist practitioners through their quandaries. We have seen that perspective in the work of Fein (1971), Gitell et al. (1973), Rokeach (1975), and Peshkin (1978). The imperative in this area is underscored by today's wrenching issues: the inherent conflict among such clustered concepts as fraternity/community/neighborhood schools, equality/justice/affirmative action/desegregation, and liberty/freedom/individualism/local control.[3] We have seen such divergent values argued at the Kensington School and in the Milford District. We know they are at issue elsewhere, too. Our hope is that by telling the Kensington story, and proposing a way of looking at it, we have made a modest contribution to the understanding and resolution of some of the complex problems that schools currently face.

Social Interaction As Mechanism. One insight from our work, raised and treated in more detail in Volume II (Milford's Recent History as Context for Kensington), is described by the phrase "social interaction as mechanism." During this project we have attempted to free ourselves from a more deterministic, mechanistic root metaphor as Pepper (1942) phrased it, and from the ideological or paradigmatic trappings of the 17th Century as Toulmin (1971) expressed it. Yet, at the same time, we did not wish to entirely abandon our search for causal explanations of Kensington's change.

The result is our embrace of theories of social interaction as potent tools for understanding change. We want to argue that organizations operate through the social interaction of two or more actors who are perceiving, thinking, wishing, feeling, acting beings. These actors may play different roles--board member, superintendent, principal, teacher, parent, student--that affect the nature of their communication. Regardless, their interactions have results. The overarching research problem of this study, its definition and its evolution, the way we approached the problem methodologically and procedurally, and the very form of the results carry the message of this tranformation in root metaphor.

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[3] Whether the values and issues cluster in these ways seems an important analytical and empirical problem in its own right.

Multiple Causation. We have argued that the four principals in our account are key "interactional mechanisms" in the Kensington story. As they communicated with their superintendents for advice, support, and direction, the school developed in very different ways. Similarly, as they talked with their teachers, seeking information and ideas, or contributing support and direction, the Kensington program changed. In addition to these four persons, our narrative revealed many other individuals and events that were equally significant in the Kensington story.

Multiple causation is an important social science concept. We have for a long time been enamored with Zetterberg's (1965) phrase for this, "inventory of determinants.[4] In our move from more mechanical and lawful interpretations of Kensington's changes to those that were more contextual, dramaturgical, and interactional, our inventory of determinants grew exponentially. Change occurred not because of one person's dictum, but as a result of discussion, argument, and wrangling in multiple arenas and among scores of people. We do not mean this pejoratively. Rather, we are emphasizing the straightforward point that nothing is simple. Oppenheimer colorfully drew the same conclusion:

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[4] His additional schemes for organizing theoretical propositions--inventories of results, sequential propositions, and axiomatic theories have been useful models as well.

> Human behavior is like a centipede, standing on many legs. Nothing that we do has a single determinate. (1955, p.10)

Perspectives on Educational Policy

The Nature of Educational Policy

In the previous section, we made the point that nothing is simple, that no human action has a single determinant. As we consider policy and policy making in the Milford School District, that point seems particularly relevant. As our narrative has demonstrated, the school and district experienced multiple pressures from multiple sources. Each source sought to influence to some degree Milford's and Kensington's school policies.

We can organize the contending sources of influence on educational policy along the lines developed by Bailey and Mosher (1968). Their typology sets out levels of policy sources: local, state, and federal. They also categorize types of influence: legislative, judicial, administrative, professional, and private interest. The resultant chart of policy dimensions neatly presents the tangle of antecedents described in our story. This chart is presented in Figure 6.4.

Insert Figure 6.4 about here.

This figure illustrates the complexity of setting policy at Kensington. Conflict, fragmentation, and confusion are inherent in this amalgam of orders, opinions, laws, doctrines, private interest pressures, beliefs, and attitudes. In general, these dimensions of policy seem applicable

	JUDICIAL	LEGISLATIVE	ADMINISTRATIVE	PROFESSIONAL	PRIVATE INTEREST GROUPS
LOCAL	Federal or State District Courts	County or Municipal Government	Local Bd. of Ed. Superintendent	NEA AFT	Religious Racial Textbook
STATE	State Supreme Court	State Legislature	State Bd. of Ed.	State Teacher Organization	Religious Racial Parent
FEDERAL	Supreme Court	U.S. Congress	Dept. of Ed. OE, NIE	Local Teacher Organization	Parents Parent Groups

Figure 6.4 Dimensions of Kensington's Educational Policy (After Bailey and Mosher, 1968)

in most public schools that wrestle with pressures generated by everything from societal issues such as shifting populations, urban blight, and a slumping economy to fads involving clothing, music, hair, and drugs. These problems and many others confront contemporary educators.

The totality of this picture of educational policy, rather than providing a coherent guide that might serve teachers and administrators in their daily duties, presents a variety of implications for educational decision makers. Bailey and Mosher, writing of this "pluralism of educational policy making" (p. 233), found in the conflict of discrepant elements the consolation that no single entity can entirely control the process of policy formation. They write:

> In American education, as in the policy generally, "pluribus" is the condition of a viable "unum." (p.223)

School administrators with little training in the resolution of conflict or in the handling of antagonistic constituencies may take little heart from this observation. For most, an array of implications may be an overwhelming barrier to decision making. For school leaders who seek sustained change, defeat may seem inevitable. If observers and analysts are correct, the frequency and intensity of environmental or contextual turbulence affecting schools is increasing and unlikely to recede soon (Finn, 1981; Iannaccone, 1981; Lieberman, 1977; Wirt, 1976).

Formulating Policy

Such observations have led to numerous admonitions and recommendations for policy planners. Sarason (1972) warned against the naivete of leaders who believed the world was subject to their manipulations. Lindblom (1972) found organizational environments too complex to expect success from a priori plans for action and argued that leaders must "muddle through" their day-to-day worlds aware of reactions to their decisions and cognizant always of their goals. He compared talented muddlers to shrewd street fighters, not bumbling incompetents. Cohen, March, and Olson (1972) found the leaders or organizations afloat in "garbage can[s]" of problems and options, grasping at solutions in a largely capricious manner. In short, dealing with the whole of a modern organization's complex environment may exceed the capacity of human means.

March and Simon (1958) stated:

> Because of the limits of human intellective capacities in comparison with the complexities of the problems that individuals and organizations face, rational behavior calls for simplified models that capture the main features of a problem without capturing all its complexities. (p. 169)

The common tendency in complexity reduction, then, is to segment the turbulent field and deal with a limited number of constituencies. Emery and Trist (1975) indicated that this predilection was most often a maladaptive response.

We appear poised over the horns of a dilemma. On one hand we recognize that policy is an extremely complex construct in today's schools. The numbers and strength of groups demanding attention in policy considerations continue to grow. On the other hand, we realize pragmatically that humans have a limited capacity to deal with complexity and often must simplify environmental turbulence before attempting to generate policies.

A resolution of this dilemma suggests the creation of new forms of policy making groups that could make use of multiple constituencies--not through competition or cooptation, but through genuine collaboration. The essence of such a decision-making group would be its ability to function as a miniature democracy. The matrix organizations of several European enterprises (Emery & Trist, 1975) or the recently fashionable Japanese management models (Ouchi, 1981) are working examples of such new forms. These models synthesize our two apparently opposite truths: one, that the complex conception of policy offers strength through diversity, and, two, that effective policy derives from a single, strong voice.

In our view, if schools such as Kensington wish to sail effectively through the turbulent straits of public schooling, they must dare to set creative courses that resolve their debilitating issues through the implementation of new forms of policy determination.

Implementing Policy

Implementing policy is a multi-staged and complex process. The process is multi-staged because there are at least four distinct arenas of action: community, district, school, and classroom. The process is complex because policy agents, whether individuals, loosely knit groups, or formal organizations, must interact at each stage to interpret mandates they receive from higher levels of authority. They must then formulate their own mandates and direct them to the lower levels of the organization.

The implementation process at the district level begins as a superintendent and board of education interact to interpret the often conflicting mandates that reflect broader state and federal policies. The resulting formal doctrine is a superintendent and board statement of concepts, structures, means, and goals. This statement must be consistent with the policies of higher authorities, but it will also reflect specific goals deemed important by the district-level policy makers. This formal doctrine, in turn, is interpreted by each principal within a district and turned into a series of more concretely defined goals, rules, and operating procedures within each school. These school-level policies are termed institutional plans. As our narrative demonstrated, the final level of interpretation takes place within the classroom where teachers' decisions and judgments about institutional plans are not always the same. Within the confines of school-level policies, they find room to act in ways most consistent with their own backgrounds and beliefs about teaching and their students. This entire process is summarized in Figure 6.5.

Insert Figure 6.5 about here.

Even this description, however, belies the complexity of policy implementation. Decisions at all levels and by each individual and group are influenced by their own contexts. Further, policy agents are aware of one another and that awareness spawns adaptations between them. When policy agendas set by higher authorities conflict with constituent interests, a fundamental dilemma for school leaders is created--as was the case in Kensington and in Milford. The resolution we witnessed was a determination by school officials to represent local interests.

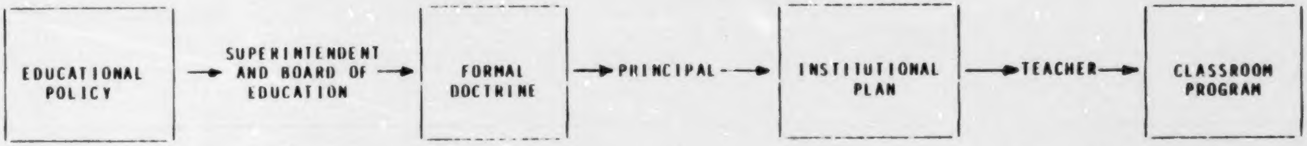

Figure 6.5 From Policy to Classroom Plan:
A Continuous Process of Interpretation and Formulation

In thinking about policy and its implementation at Kensington and Milford, some issues that affected the process in this school and district stand out. We believe they may be important in other school settings as well.

1) Behind almost all of the changes in district policy lurked the problem of declining resources and the deteriorating economy of the community.

2) Demographic changes in the community had an impact on school and district policy.

3) State and federal initiatives in education most affected policy at the district and school level when those agendas were congruent with local needs and goals.

4) District and school policies were dramatically affected by changes in leadership.

5) Individuals differed in their ability to implement policy.

6) Kensington's organizational identity accrued as a result of its past policies and reputations and from the incumbents of its classroom and administrative positions. This identity affected the implementation of school policy.

7) Individuals were hired for positions at the district and school level who significantly altered long-standing policies. New policies were short-lived if they were discrepant with fundamental characteristics of the system.

The School Principal as Policy Agent

When we attempt to generalize from our study of Dr. Wales, we find his image not unlike Wolcott's (1973) principal, "Ed Bell," or, we suspect, many other elementary school principals throughout the country. In short, they are well-intentioned individuals who strive, even heroically in some instances, to create school environments that allow students to learn. But their preparation for this endeavor is often inadequate.

Sarason (1971) criticized one widely held assumption about principal preparedness, that is, that successful teachers will naturally make successful principals. He found several disquieting flaws in this logic: a) being a leader of children does not necessarily prepare one for being a leader of adults; b) teachers generally work alone and are not, therefore, experienced at working with or leading groups of adults; c) teachers are subject to a school's tradition--a perceived natural order--and instructors who are identified as "good" teachers are usually those who have implicitly accepted that tradition; d) teachers are motivated to become principals because of boredom with classroom routines, yearnings for higher salaries, or a desire for more prestige and power. The decision to advance into administration is most often a personal decision made by the teacher with little regard for whether the teacher would be a strong, effective school leader. Districts rarely call on a teacher to become a principal; e) because most of the work of a teacher confines him or her to a classroom, interaction with the school principal is limited. Therefore, little experience is gained through teaching that helps one to understand the total role of the principal. Sarason concluded forcefully:

> What I am suggesting is that being a teacher for a number of years may be in most instances antithetical to being an educational leader or vehical of change. (p. 115)

Just as Sarason found teaching experience insufficient preparation for becoming a principal, other authors have questioned the usefulness of most formal university training in administration. Haskins (1978), once a principal himself and current director of a field experience program for principal training at Harvard, has worried that problems begin with the notion that "completion of university courses becomes tantamount to certification that the graduate is prepared to practice in a certain profession." He has criticized most university training programs for principals, claiming they were too eclectic and failed to provide principals with the strong convictions needed to carry out the job effectively. He stated that most programs failed to focus on the principal but played instead to a broader audience of administrative candidates; often programs attended more to the needs of men and women whose ambitions included the school superintendency. Further, he claimed that course work was mostly theoretical and dealt little with the practical needs of principals. Finally, Haskins found that commitment to new methods and instructional strategies developed easily in university classrooms but was frequently lost in the actual public school setting. He concluded:

> The principal of an elementary school is probably the most important person responsible for the overall tone and quality of an elementary school, yet our investment in the selection and training of elementary school principals does not reflect that importance. (p. 42)

One might conclude that formal training currently offers no guarantee for the successful training of effective future principals.

Moreover, the position of principal itself has been found to be frought with problems, complicating the situation further. In this regard, Goldhammer et al. (1971) made the following points. The role of the principal is uncertain due to a lack of systematic guidelines for principal behavior. Elementary school principals are the lowest status administrators in school systems in the eyes of other administrators and community residents. They are isolated from their peers in other schools and increasingly cut out of district-level decision making. The view of principals as line managers who work closely with their teachers and are involved in the resolution of teacher concerns is jeopardized by increasingly militant teacher unions and the dawning of tough-minded negotiating over teachers' contracts. Principals are expected to manage human relations and instruction within their schools in environments which are increasingly uncertain, tasks for which no technology has proved successful.

Pauly (1978) added to this discouraging picture as he concluded that principals' performance was dominated by career concerns best met by working carefully within existing school frameworks and by avoiding changes or innovations. Further, Howes (1976), himself a principal, and Wirt (1976) examined the contextual constraints that impinged on even a motivated principal's prerogatives to guide a school. Included in their discussions were such factors as tax revolts, demands for accountability, racial tension, the personality and demands of an incumbent superintendent, the mood of community citizens and parents regarding their schools and change, staff drive, and teacher militancy.

In summary, the literature suggests that neither teaching experience nor most formal training in educational administration provide an adequate base of knowledge from which principals may act to effectively lead their schools. Environmental influences only worsen the story.

There is, on the other hand, a substantial body of literature that equates effective schools with effective principals and from which a different conclusion can be drawn. The successful schools literature (see for example Armor et al., 1976; Brookover and Lezotte, 1977; Edmonds, 1979; Weber, 1971; Wenezky and Winfield, 1979; Wynne, 1981) reports that principals, in fact, can positively affect their schools and student achievement.[5] Principals can accomplish this by a) creating positive learning climates, b) setting high expectations for achievement, c) monitoring classroom and student learning, d) conversing frequently with their teachers to familiarize themselves with instructional problems and the teachers' needs, and e) providing evaluation and information to resolve teaching problems.

Dr. Wales's activities at Kensington, viewed in the light of these characteristics of effective school leadership, become purposeful. They clearly contributed to a quieter and more orderly climate for learning and promoted communication between himself and the staff. These attributes of the school setting that resulted from his actions were necessary for the improvement of the school's capacity for excellence. As if he were building the foundations of Maslow's hierarchy (1954), Wales seemed intuitively to work at meeting the primary needs of his staff and students for physiological well-being and safety. The higher order needs for self-fulfillment cannot be satisfied if primary needs are not. As important as well-being and safety are in schools, however, they are not sufficient conditions for excellent instructional programs.

It remains to be seen whether Wales will accrue the experience and specialized in-service training that will allow him to meet other criteria for effective schools. His challenge is to move beyond the job of organizational maintenance to one of instructional problem solving and inspirational leadership. Blumberg and Greenfield (1980) very succinctly described this aspect of effective principals. In their study they found successful principals to be individuals who did not see themselves as organizational maintainers.

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[5] This literature is not without its own methodological and conceptual flaws. See Bossert, Dwyer, Rowan, and Lee (forthcoming) for a critique and proposed research agenda.

> Obviously, they had to perform certain routine administrative functions. But the way they described themselves, their interests, their joys and frustrations, shows they focused their energy and time on other types of things. They were proactive in trying to make the schools in which they worked a different place from the one they found. . . . They . . . frequently test(ed) the boundary lines of their authority and influence, to make the structure work for them and their needs. What seemed to be at issue for most of them, most of the time, was not "We can't do that because things aren't done that way." Rather, the issue appeared to be simply "How should we go about doing it?" (p. 230)

Similar images of potent principals emerge from literature on change and innovation in schools (c.f. Berman et al., 1975; Mann, 1978; Rosenblum and Jzastrab, n.d.). Finally, we would enter a cautionary note. Concepts such as change, innovation, improvement, or reform are at odds with current trends within school systems. School leaders who choose such a role for themselves may run significant risks.

Summary and Conclusion

We began this volume, The Kensington School Today, with three purposes in mind. First, we wished to vividly describe the school and its context as we found it on our return in 1979. Second, we hoped to compare the current Kensington with the conception, building, faculty, and procedures that we had examined in 1964. Third, we wanted to share our interpretations of the changes we found and to present their multiple and interrelated determinants in a lucid and useful manner.

At the descriptive level, the most striking change was the school's return to the "old Milford type." The extent of the retrenchment we found, however, was unanticipated. We likened the current Kensington to an urban elementary school that we had studied previously.[6] That conclusion came as a reflection from one of the investigators who said, "I'm back at the Washington School with my friend and colleague, William Geoffrey" (Smith and Geofrey, 1968). Kensington's paramount emphasis on control, discipline, and basic skills provided most of the data for that conclusion.

Interpretatively, the most important change in the school seemed to lie in its current absence of visionary zeal. Kensington lost its original organizational identity over the past 15 years. Current faculty and patrons believe this change was beneficial, in part, because the school's new identity coincides more with community beliefs and values regarding education. In their minds, the school practices what it preaches as it maintains a continued struggle for effectiveness in the best sense of the term as conceived by Edmonds (1979).

As we searched for antecedents, for determinants, for reasons in Kensington's dramatic changes, we were led to ever widening circles of inquiry. Ordering the findings of our inquiry resulted in a longitudinal nested systems model, a perspective that we believe is instructive for educationists wishing to understand the dynamics of schooling.

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[6] We readily acknowledge that even the label "urban school" is something of a stereotype. The nature and degree of diversity in urban schools today seems a worthy problem for continued investigation and analysis. For instance, see the accounts of "America's Schools" in Daedalus, Summer and Fall, 1981.

Kensington's organizational identity has changed. The processes that led to that change were multiple and complex; all were the result of social interaction. Personal agendas, policies, politics, and a host of autochthonous events in Kensington's context conflicted or converged to bring about the Kensington we know today. The actors in the setting viewed the events with both hope and despair. This was the human condition of education and schooling at Kensington between 1964 and 1979, the first 15 years in the life of the school. Sailing stormy straits seems an apt metaphor.

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